



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ELTHAM COLLEGE  
INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Eltham College

Full Name of School	<b>Eltham College</b>		
DfE Number	<b>305/6074</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1058438</b>		
Address	<b>Eltham College Grove Park Road Mottingham London SE9 4QF</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>020 8857 1455</b>		
Fax Number	<b>020 8857 1913</b>		
Email Address	<b>mail@eltham-college.org.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Paul Henderson</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr David Robins</b>		
Age Range	<b>6 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>834</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys (6-16); mixed (16-18)</b>		
Numbers by Age	6-11:	<b>194</b>	11-16: <b>419</b>
	16-18 (girls):	<b>59</b>	16-18 (boys): <b>162</b>
Inspection dates	<b>29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule* for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in March 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Founded in 1842 for the sons of missionaries, Eltham College is now a boys' day school for 834 pupils, aged between six and eighteen. Years 12 and 13 are co-educational, with 59 girls and 162 boys. Although the Christian values and commitment to service that underlay its foundation are central to the school's ethos, pupils of all faiths and backgrounds are welcomed. The school is located at Mottingham, in south-east London, where it occupies a 65-acre site. One hundred and ninety-four boys up to the age of eleven belong to the junior school, which occupies its own premises on the site.
- 1.2 The school aims to encourage each pupil to achieve at their highest level, both academically and across the breadth of school life, giving each a well-rounded experience, a sense of purpose, and the self-confidence to equip them for the next challenge. The school is a charity governed by its trustees, who include members nominated by missionary societies, the parents, the teachers and the London Boroughs of Bexley and Bromley. The leadership of the junior school changed in September 2010. Since the previous inspection, the school has acquired additional playing fields and extended the dining hall.
- 1.3 Entry to the school is selective. Standardised tests taken by pupils in the school indicate that the ability of pupils throughout the school is far above the national average. The pupils' backgrounds reflect the school's south London location in their cultural and ethnic diversity; 238 pupils receive scholarships or bursaries.
- 1.4 Three pupils have statements of special educational need. A further 83 pupils in the senior school, and 21 in the junior school, have been identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), 37 of whom receive specialist support. Thirty-eight pupils in the senior school, and 29 in the junior school, have English as an additional language (EAL). Very few of these require additional English tuition, being able to access the curriculum with classroom support from their teachers.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

### **The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills**

- 2.1 The overall quality of the pupils' achievements is good. The school is highly successful in fulfilling its aim of enabling pupils to achieve well both academically and in the broad range of school life, giving each a sense of purpose and self-confidence for the future.
- 2.2 Pupils in both the senior and junior schools acquire good levels of knowledge, skill and understanding across the range of the curriculum. They are highly articulate, as is evidenced by the success regularly achieved by debating teams in national competitions. They have well-developed skills of numeracy and literacy, which they apply well as they move through the school. Most are competent users of information and communication technology (ICT) to assist their learning. Achievement in some aspects of the extra-curricular programme, such as music (the choir trebles perform regularly with major national orchestras and conductors), art, junior school chess, some sport and senior school community service, is excellent.
- 2.3 In the junior school, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but the work seen in lessons and books, and demonstrated by their performance in the senior school entrance test, is high in relation to national expectations for their ages. This level of attainment indicates that junior school pupils make good progress relative to pupils of similar ability. The following analysis uses national data for the years 2007 to 2009, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE and A level have been far above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. These results indicate that pupils throughout the senior school also make good progress relative to pupils of similar ability, which is confirmed by statistical analysis of their A-level results, and by the 26% A\* grades achieved at A level in 2010.
- 2.4 Pupils at all stages of the school display excellent attitudes to learning. They are attentive and responsive, and persevere well with the tasks they are given. Their behaviour is very good and they are polite and considerate towards each other and adults. Written work is well presented and reveals high levels of endeavour and care.
- 2.5 Pupils in both parts of the school benefit from a curriculum that is well-constructed, wide-ranging and covers all the required fields of learning. In the junior school, the emphasis is on acquiring skills of numeracy and literacy, and the programme allows scope for innovation, such as the introduction of Mandarin as a foreign language. In the senior school, the curriculum is particularly strong in Years 12 and 13, when the community service and liberal studies programmes provide pupils with excellent enrichment beyond their examination courses. The extra-curricular programme is good, wide-ranging and appreciated by both parents and pupils. In the senior school, pupils' participation is not monitored or reported on, which limits encouragement for pupils to be involved and benefit fully from the programme.
- 2.6 Pupils' achievement is enhanced by good teaching throughout the school, and pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire recognise the help that they receive from their teachers to enable their progress. Teachers plan lessons with clear

purpose, although in the lessons observed they often employed only a limited variety of teaching approaches. Relationships are excellent, based on teachers' good knowledge of the pupils and their needs. Support for those with LDD is good in both parts of the school, enabling these pupils to progress well. The specialist support available for these pupils in the junior school is limited in view of the school's ongoing plans to develop its provision. Marking in both sections of the school is good, and particularly so in Years 10 to 13. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good, and the grades awarded each half term are effective in enabling pupils, teachers and parents to track how well individual pupils are progressing.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.7 The personal development of pupils in both the junior and senior schools is excellent. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. They have a very good understanding of their place and role in the community and high levels of self-confidence and self-worth. They know that they are valued as individuals and they treat each other with noticeable respect and sensitivity. They listen intently in chapel and assembly, as to a talk in chapel about the personal qualities that make a 'star'.
- 2.8 Pupils' moral awareness is highly developed. Pupils of all ages have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Their behaviour in class and around the school is excellent. Older pupils engage with ethical issues with insight and discernment. Parents rate the attitudes and values promoted by the school very highly.
- 2.9 The social development of pupils throughout the school is outstanding. Pupils support each other well through a variety of mentoring schemes that link older to younger pupils. Prefects and school council representatives take their roles and responsibilities towards the community seriously. Many pupils are involved in charity fund-raising and community service, demonstrating high levels of social responsibility.
- 2.10 Pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity is excellent. Pupils are well informed about the major world faiths. They work harmoniously with fellow pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. They enjoy and contribute towards the high quality music and art that are integral to the school's strongly developed cultural ethos. The pupils' understanding of the government and public institutions of Britain is appropriate, significantly facilitated by the school's London location, so that, for instance, a party was able to visit the Chilcot Inquiry.
- 2.11 Pupils in both parts of the school benefit from the strong pastoral care provided. Form teachers and tutors know their pupils well and give good support and monitoring. The health centre provides a valuable source of advice for older pupils, independent of the school's hierarchy. Pupils receive important guidance on healthy lifestyles, hygiene and the pressures of growing up today through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, which supports the pastoral care system. Policies to promote good behaviour and to protect pupils from harassment are well implemented. Pupils confirm that bullying is rare and that the school deals with any instances that occur effectively and speedily. The strong mutual respect between pupils and teachers underlies the success of the pastoral care provided.
- 2.12 Arrangements to promote welfare, health and safety are generally good. Risk assessments, including those for the minimisation of risk due to fire and other hazards, and to promote safety whilst on trips away from school, are thorough. Appropriate training is provided for all staff in the safeguarding of pupils. Health and

safety issues are regularly reviewed. Attendance and admissions registers are carefully completed, but a routine for copying them each month for secure retention has not been established.

- 2.13 Pupils feel happy and confident, and those responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire overwhelmingly confirmed that they like being at the school.

### **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.14 Overall, the governance of the school is good and ensures that the school successfully meets its aims, although some record keeping has been insufficiently rigorous. The governors are committed and hard working. They have a good range of experience and expertise. They understand the school and its needs well. The committee structure provides effective oversight and forward planning, including specific support for the junior school. In most respects, governors are diligent about fulfilling their responsibilities with respect to child protection, welfare, health and safety. The educational experience of pupils is significantly enhanced by the extensive playing fields and the high quality of some of the buildings.
- 2.15 The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The newly established management team in the junior school is already providing effective leadership and developing strategies for improvement. Although the change of leadership in the junior school necessitated some temporary redistribution of roles in the senior school management team, leadership and management have continued to be effective in giving clear direction and setting expectations for the senior school. Development planning and self-evaluation are good and reveal keen awareness by the school's management of priorities for future progress.
- 2.16 Heads of department and subject co-ordinators exercise good leadership and management of their areas of responsibility. They enjoy freedom to drive forward initiatives to raise performance by pupils and teachers, within the overall framework of development. Helpful guidance has been created in the senior school on teaching and learning, although it is not clear who is to monitor its implementation. A comprehensive programme of induction supports new teaching staff, with clear expectations of standards. A detailed programme of appraisal is in operation in the senior school, and a similar programme being adapted for the junior school, enabling monitoring and development of staff by heads of department on a two-year cycle. Pastoral care is managed effectively through heads of year and their team of tutors.
- 2.17 Thorough and effective procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are established, and correctly recorded in a central register, but scrutiny of personnel files reveals that safe keeping of the documentation associated with the recruitment process has not been rigorous.
- 2.18 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent, as is recognised by the parents. Communication by post and electronic mail, and the provision of grades on pupils' progress each half-term, keep parents well-informed and involved in their children's education. Parents of current and prospective pupils receive all necessary information about the school. Written reports provide detailed academic advice, although little about pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities. The regular teacher-parent meetings have included helpful presentations, for example, on coping with stress. An effective complaints procedure has been established. The parents' association is active, and form representatives ensure that good links are maintained with parents from across the school.

- 2.19 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were strongly supportive of the school; particularly, the attitudes and values promoted by the school, the range of the curricular and extra-curricular provision, the ease of communicating with the school and the timeliness of the school's responses. Parents were well satisfied with the progress of their children, the standards of behaviour, the information they receive about the school and the way that the school is managed. A small number felt that concerns they had raised had not been well handled; however, inspection evidence indicates that concerns are in most cases handled diligently. A significant proportion of the parents who responded added a comment to the effect that they are delighted with the school and that their child is thriving.

### **3. ACTION POINTS**

#### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

3.1 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore must:

- ensure that documentation relating to the safe recruitment of staff is kept carefully for future reference [Part 3, paragraph 7.(a), under Welfare, health and safety];
- retain for a period of at least three years monthly copies of the attendance and admissions registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 [Part 3, paragraph 17., under Welfare, health and safety].

#### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

3.2 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Extend monitoring across and within departments in the senior school in order to share the best practice in teaching and learning.
2. Improve monitoring of the participation of senior school pupils in the extra-curricular programme, and include it in reports to parents.
3. In the junior school, ensure that sufficient resources are available to develop further the support provided to pupils with LDD.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed a sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions, assemblies and chapel services. Inspectors visited the library and the health centre, and ate with the pupils in the dining hall. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Rodney Fox

Mr Paul Baker

Mr David Dawswell

Reporting Inspector

Former Head of Department and Director of  
Activities, IAPS school

Second Master, HMC school