

School inspection report

2 to 4 December 2025

St Lawrence College

College Road

Ramsgate

CT11 7AE

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. Governors have an informed oversight of all areas of school life. They ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities to consistently meet the Standards, including those for pupils in the school's boarding accommodation.
2. Governors have an acute awareness of the range of risks to pupils' wellbeing. They implement and regularly evaluate measures, for example, to decrease the likelihood and impact of risk-related incidents.
3. The curriculum meets pupils' aspirations and interests. Leaders adapt the curriculum for boarders who join the school for short periods from overseas. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are effectively supported.
4. Leaders adjust the range of subject choice and examination courses to meet the needs of different year groups. Subject choices preserve breadth and balance, while allowing specialism at GCSE and in the sixth form.
5. The activities programme is compulsory for all pupils after school on four afternoons in the week. It provides a comprehensive range of opportunities. The vast majority of activities are valued by pupils, but some arrangements for older pupils lack focus.
6. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge. Most plan lessons to ensure that pupils make the progress they should. However, some teachers do not routinely check pupils' understanding of new content presented and so some pupils lose interest.
7. Teachers use effective strategies in lessons to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress.
8. The effective personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme is supported by addresses in assemblies and in chapel services.
9. Pupils receive careers and higher education advice appropriate for their age. Pupils learn about relevant aspects of finance ready for leaving school.
10. Pupils show respect for those of different faiths, national backgrounds and gender differences. Male and female pupils, boarders and day pupils enjoy equal opportunities.
11. The school's behaviour policy and anti-bullying strategy are effective. Expectations are understood by pupils and staff. Pupils are well behaved. Bullying is rare, and if it does occur, it is addressed effectively by pastoral leaders.
12. Buildings and grounds are well maintained. Any potential risks to pupils are minimised through systematic detailed checks of health and safety and fire procedures. The on-site security of all pupils throughout the day and night is prioritised.
13. Pupils recognise the value of service to others, including in their commitment to volunteering in the local area. They are supportive of each other in boarding houses.
14. School structures and the availability of senior leaders ensure that pupils' views are heard.

15. Safeguarding arrangements are effective in promoting pupils' wellbeing. Leaders are especially mindful of the additional risks for boarders. Effective pastoral care ensures that pupils who may be at risk of harm are identified quickly, and appropriate action is taken. Safeguarding leaders liaise effectively with external agencies when required.
16. Leaders have a systematic approach to checking that staff are suitable to work with children. However, there was a historic error in overlooking the requirement to check a small number of visiting music teachers against the prohibition from teaching list. This was rectified before the end of the inspection.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are 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 met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that teachers are consistent in stimulating and maintaining pupils' interest in lessons, checking frequently that pupils continue to improve their knowledge and understanding across all aspects of their learning
- develop the activities programme further so that it is as productive for older pupils as it is for other pupils in the school
- systematically complete all the required checks on visiting teachers before they take up appointment, including against the list of those prohibited from teaching.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

17. The governing body has relevant experience and skills to oversee the school's work effectively. Leaders' reports to governors collate appropriate evidence to demonstrate that the school continues to meet the Standards consistently, including the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools (NMS).
18. Governors check the information that leaders provide through regular visits and audits of school documentation. They spend time in boarding houses and hold meetings with staff, boarders and day pupils.
19. Governors maintain a comprehensive register that identifies risks to pupils' wellbeing. They record in detail the measures taken to manage and reduce each risk. The register is regularly reviewed and the effectiveness of risk-reduction measures evaluated to inform further improvements.
20. Leaders are routinely involved in school life. They meet pupils, for example, at the start and end of the school day. Leaders make themselves available to pupils after assemblies and chapel services and at lunchtime. As a result of this regular, direct communication, they have detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and ambitions. Senior leaders and house staff work closely to promote pupils' wellbeing. Leaders' open working relationships with external agencies, including local authorities, children's services and the police, mean that additional wellbeing support is accessed when needed.
21. Academic leaders have an appropriate knowledge of the subjects they teach. They set realistic targets for pupils' academic progress. However, teachers do not consistently meet pupils' needs in some lessons. Consequently, leaders have introduced a programme of training and more frequent observations of teaching and learning.
22. Leaders ensure that appropriate strategies are used to adapt learning effectively to meet the needs of pupils who have SEND.
23. Pupils who join the school for a short time from overseas are well supported. Leaders adapt the curriculum to cater for individual needs and ambitions. They provide appropriate guidance for those pupils who speak EAL that are in need of extra help in understanding, speaking and writing in the English language.
24. Leaders' decisions are underpinned by the school's aim to be a caring, Christian community where every pupil is nurtured, challenged and inspired to flourish. Themes in PSHE, chapel and assemblies are co-ordinated to further pupils' personal development.
25. The boarding environment is conducive to positive lifestyles and learning. Leaders have organised the school day so that pupils are occupied in lessons and/or co-curricular activity for most of the day, from breakfast to supper. Day pupils remain in school until just before boarders eat in the evening. Younger pupils enjoy the intensity of activity. Some of the arrangements for older pupils lack focus and do not support their academic or personal development.
26. The school's website provides accessible and clear information for staff, pupils and parents of both current and prospective pupils. All the required policies and documents are available, including those relating to boarding.

27. Governors and senior leaders have a strategic approach to identifying and managing any risk of harm to pupils' wellbeing. Adults dealing with pupils have up-to-date and relevant training. Pastoral staff are vigilant to the mental health and wellbeing of boarders and day pupils in their house.
28. Leaders ensure that all pupils' views are represented. They stipulate that pupil leaders chair and oversee the school council. The council is representative of both day and boarding pupils, including pupils who have SEND, from a variety of national backgrounds.
29. The school's complaints procedure is appropriate and effective. Parents are encouraged to share concerns with house staff or senior leaders. All concerns, including at the informal stage, are recorded centrally and reviewed by governors to identify any themes or patterns that require further action.
30. The school reports to the appropriate local authority any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times in the school year. A small proportion of pupils in the school have recently received education, health and care plans (EHC plans). Leaders are aware of the duty to share information with the local authority with regards to EHC plans and the use of funds for these.
31. Leaders make appropriate adjustments for pupils who have SEND through an accessibility plan. All documentation is provided in a variety of fonts. Leaders have strategies to enable any pupil who has a physical disability to board. Consequently, the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

33. The curriculum nurtures the needs and aspirations of each pupil in line with the school's values.
34. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 study a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, sciences, humanities and languages. Pupils in Year 7 study both French and Spanish, going on to choose one or both subjects for GCSE studies.
35. Leaders have recently evaluated the impact of the curriculum on pupils' academic outcomes and personal development. As a result, pupils now study for a maximum of nine rather than ten subjects at GCSE. Pupils can select from a wide range to suit their own needs and aspirations. As appropriate, pupils can opt for additional numeracy or literacy support instead of a GCSE subject. Specialist groups cater for pupils for whom foundation-level mathematics is a more appropriate qualification.
36. Leaders have introduced BTEC qualifications in sport and business studies because they are more appropriate to some pupils' skills.
37. Teachers adapt the curriculum and lesson plans to reflect the previous educational experiences of pupils who join the school for short periods from overseas. Many pupils from other European countries, for example, have received no teaching in art or technology. These pupils receive focused support from teachers or support staff in learning basic creative and practical skills. As a result, they make good progress during their time at the school.
38. Leaders assess the spoken and written English skills of overseas pupils who speak EAL when they join the school. Guidance is provided to subject teachers on suitable strategies to allow these pupils to access the curriculum fully. Other pupils provide informal support, both in lessons and boarding houses. Most teachers adapt their language appropriately, or explicitly explain technical terms. Lesson material is made available online to enable pupils to preview and review content at their own speed. As a result, pupils who speak EAL quickly develop their communication and literary skills in English. Those in the sixth form achieve the necessary levels of competence to enable them to enter universities in the United Kingdom.
39. Leaders liaise with pupils' previous schools and test pupils on entry to ensure early identification of needs for pupils who have SEND. They work with parents and pupils to decide on appropriate support. Almost all pupils who have SEND follow a full curriculum. Typically, teachers unobtrusively check understanding and adjust tasks if needed. Specialist teachers provide additional support as needed. As appropriate, pupils who have SEND can choose non-examined courses to support their numeracy and literacy. Leaders monitor each pupil's progress regularly to ensure that support arrangements are effective. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress in lessons and achieve the examination results they need to move to the next phase of their education.
40. Typically, teachers have the subject knowledge required to teach GCSE and/or A-level courses. They plan lessons to integrate a range of well-chosen resources. Overall, they manage behaviour effectively. Teachers in technology and drama encourage pupils to develop ambitious, creative ideas. In the majority of lessons, teachers are alert to pupils' responses and adjust their planning appropriately. They meet pupils' needs by varying their questions, regularly checking pupils' understanding of new concepts. In English, art and psychology lessons, for example, pupils are given time to consider and reflect on their thoughts and to challenge the ideas of others. In subject areas where this happens routinely, pupils achieve well. In some lessons, teachers do not deviate from

planned presentations. They do not check pupils' understanding well enough and are content that only a few pupils answer questions. As a result, other pupils lose interest and concentration.

41. Pupils benefit from a well-considered programme of PSHE. This is developed further by the content in chapel and assemblies. Over time, pupils build their confidence, self-esteem and spiritual awareness.
42. Leaders organise trips relevant to their subject. These deepen and broaden the curriculum, allowing pupils to develop their skills and knowledge directly, for example, in history through visits to World War One battlefields or in art through trips to London galleries.
43. Academic leaders have embedded a framework to evaluate individual pupils' progress relative to their starting points. Teachers have an accurate and up-to-date awareness of pupils' achievement. They base this on regular checks and discussions with pupils so that any gaps in learning are addressed quickly. Teachers provide regular feedback on written work, reminding pupils of areas on which they need to concentrate.
44. Leaders provide a range of sporting and co-curricular activities that are planned after school on four days of the week. Attendance is mandatory for almost all pupils. Most activities, for example the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE), help pupils to build resilience. Other activities, particularly for older pupils, occupy pupils' time without a planned purpose. As a result, a significant minority of pupils use the time for homework. Boarders study for a further period during the evening and hence become tired.
45. Pupils of all ages contribute to drama productions and concerts and achieve drama and music qualifications. The games curriculum is organised so that nearly every pupil represents the school in one or more sports. Specialists provide individualised coaching for elite players. Pupils achieve at a high level, with many gaining national recognition as individuals or in selection for national teams.

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

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

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

47. The curriculum and the boarding community help pupils to acquire self-knowledge and awareness of their strengths. In line with the school aims, adults continually promote pupils' personal development. Art lessons, for example, offer space for self-expression and exploration of identity. Chapel services challenge pupils to reflect on their attitudes. As a result, pupils grow in self-confidence and, consequently, self-esteem.
48. Leaders plan and implement well-organised PSHE tutor sessions. Pupils are taught all the required aspects of relationships and sex education (RSE). Leaders systematically co-ordinate topics in chapel or in assemblies with the programme. Pupils treat each other with respect.
49. The games programme in Years 7 and 8 enables pupils to develop their skills and competencies in large participation sports such as rugby, hockey, netball and cricket. They develop at least competent levels of skill for their age. The physical education (PE) curriculum provides a wide variety of sports and physical activities for older pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy exercise and remain physically fit.
50. Pupils eat healthily in the dining hall and school cafe. The PSHE programme reinforces messages about the importance of a balanced diet, and the dangers to health of, for example, smoking, vaping and using illegal drugs.
51. Almost all pupils develop a deep spiritual awareness. They appreciate the beauty in art and architecture, for example, on trips to Canterbury. Pupils value time for worship in chapel. Many belong to Christian groups that meet regularly. They appreciate singing as a community-enhancing activity. House staff ensure that pupils of different faiths have protected times and space to pray.
52. Teachers and house staff seize opportunities to sharpen pupils' awareness of moral issues. They consider, for example, aspects of medical ethics in PSHE, or environmental choices in geography. In English lessons, teachers emphasise how writers use fictional characters to present readers with their own personal, moral challenges.
53. Leaders ensure that boarders have enough independence at weekends to develop a mature sense of responsibility for themselves and their community. Boarders consider the needs of others in the choices they make in their daily life.
54. Pupils take responsibility for their actions. Leaders set clear expectations in the school's behaviour policy. Sanctions are understood by pupils and staff but rarely needed. Pupils behave well in boarding accommodation and around school. Leaders support pupils in resolving friendship issues, for example through 'restorative' lunches.
55. Pupils are taught to identify and address any possible bullying behaviours. Strategies to counter bullying are regularly discussed in PSHE and chapel services and supported by informative written guidance. As a result, incidents of bullying are rare.
56. An appropriate number and range of adults are trained to give first aid. First aid equipment is distributed around the school and regularly checked. Teachers are made aware of pupils' medical

information when relevant. Staff who administer medication to pupils are given appropriate training. They communicate effectively with the medical centre.

57. The school's buildings and grounds are well maintained. Regular maintenance checks are carried out across the site. Appropriate records are kept. Health and safety protocols are thoughtful and meticulously implemented. These include those related to fire safety and security. Fire evacuation procedures are regularly practised, including during times when all boarders are in their houses. Leaders ensure that assessments of risk in all school activities are regularly evaluated.
58. Boarding accommodation is well equipped and furnished. Pupils feel safe. They enjoy the facilities they have as boarders. Food is of a good quality and plentiful. Boarders are well looked after, including when they are unwell. They select adults to whom they would talk if they were to have a concern or worry. Boarders receive a thorough induction programme including in the procedure to follow in the event of fire.
59. Pupils are effectively supervised. Leaders make regular checks on pupils' whereabouts and have clear procedures to follow in the event that a boarder was to go missing. Guardianship arrangements are monitored closely to ensure boarders are safeguarded.
60. Prefects have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, including to ensure that all pupils' views are represented in the school council. They have a key role in supporting overseas pupils who join the school for a short time. Leaders use the suggestions of the school council to inform their future planning.
61. Boarders' health and wellbeing is effectively promoted through the provision and implementation of a well-developed tutor system, supported by other house staff and medical professionals. Pupils have access to trained counsellors.
62. The school's admission and attendance policies are implemented effectively. Policies reflect the statutory guidance for both day and boarding pupils. The school's attendance champion liaises with the relevant authorities when necessary. The local authority is informed about any pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard transition points, or if a boarder does not return to school at the start of term.

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

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

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

64. Leaders, staff and pupils promote respect for those of different race, faith and gender. Chapel services, assemblies and the PSHE curriculum reinforce the school's ethos of kindness and empathy. Typically, staff use examples from biblical and other literature to exemplify the values of compassion, service and respect.
65. Boarders respect each other's national, racial and religious backgrounds. They use opportunities to explore and understand the views of pupils who have different perspectives on world events. Leaders organise regular 'culture days' to allow overseas boarders to explain the relevance of their national traditions. The art curriculum successfully promotes respect for those of different genders and racial backgrounds through a topic on self-portraiture. Pupils' cultural insight is extended through art, music and drama events and visits to London.
66. Pupils develop an awareness of political systems and the importance of democracy. Those pupils chosen for school councils and boarding groups ensure that they accurately represent the views of others, including minority opinion. Teachers use opportunities, for example, from Shakespeare's plays, to encourage pupils to consider unconscious racism, stereotyping and the impact of economic background on people's attitudes and behaviour.
67. Pupils take opportunities to help and serve others in the school and local community, developing their leadership and communication skills. Senior pupils are highly supportive of younger boarders and those who join the school for short periods from abroad. In lessons and during homework they readily support those who speak EAL.
68. Many pupils are involved in local environmental and sustainability projects, for example, litter collecting. Numerous pupils regularly support the work of the local Salvation Army. Several pupils also undertake service activities through the DofE scheme.
69. The PSHE programme includes careers education appropriate to pupils' ages. Teachers enable pupils to recognise their skills and areas for development. They reinforce crucial workplace expectations such as punctuality, teamwork and health and safety. Pupils build the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their futures, such as choices of subjects, universities and careers, at appropriate stages. They value the specific advice given by subject teachers. The programme also develops the general skills required for employability such as interview practice, work experience, making job applications and collaborative working. As a result, pupils leave school to study a broad range of degree and other courses or take up employment in the UK and overseas.
70. Pupils' economic understanding and learning related to personal finance begins in Year 7. Pupils explore ways of saving and investing money. By the end of Year 11, pupils develop a sound understanding of a range of topics, for example, credit and borrowing, entrepreneurship and budgeting. Pupils in the sixth form are given guidance on financial management beyond school, such as how to manage student loans, costing a healthy diet and mortgages. They discuss wider themes such as the impact of poverty on mental health. By the time they leave, pupils have received a broad economic education that has prepared them effectively for life at university and beyond.

71. Teachers avoid any political bias. Chapel and assembly themes are strategically mapped to promote and discuss British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. As a result, pupils develop a balanced perspective of the world, which prepares them effectively for the responsibilities of living in society. The nature of their boarding life means that pupils are well prepared for the practicalities of life beyond school.

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

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

Safeguarding

73. Safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively so that the wellbeing of both boarders and day pupils is promoted. Leaders have created a secure safeguarding culture. Governors are well trained, so they oversee the implementation of safeguarding arrangements effectively. They review records, hold discussions with staff and pupils, and visit boarding houses. They maintain an informed oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements. This ensures that the required procedures and protocols are followed.
74. Staff receive frequent and detailed safeguarding training, including in preventing the risk of radicalisation and countering extremism. House and other pastoral staff have been trained to the same level as safeguarding leaders. Leaders keep an accurate register of training provided and who has attended. Training reflects the role of each member of staff in identifying potential risks to pupils, such as in boarding houses or off-site activities.
75. The safeguarding policy includes suitable definitions of abuse and is in line with latest statutory guidance. Boarding and teaching staff communicate effectively if they notice changes in pupils' behaviour or demeanour. Staff share concerns with senior leaders to ensure that pupils are appropriately supported. Issues that reach the thresholds for formal reporting are immediately addressed.
76. Records are up to date, thorough and show details of how concerns are followed up, notes of any action taken, decisions made, and outcomes reached. They include formal risk assessments for pupils when needed. The action taken is tightly monitored and evaluated. Medical staff and school counsellors have a prominent role. They work closely with safeguarding leaders so that support for individual pupils promotes their emotional and physical wellbeing.
77. Safeguarding leaders engage regularly with local safeguarding partners, including children's services and, when necessary, the police. Leaders and staff seek immediate advice if needed. They understand their role in reporting any person to relevant regulatory bodies as required. The low-level concerns procedures work effectively. Staff are aware of the increased risks associated with both a boarding community and the particular needs of pupils from overseas. Staff know to report issues if they feel uneasy.
78. Leaders have recently introduced and implemented effective procedures to prevent access to inappropriate material online. Website and other online use by staff and pupils are closely monitored. Governors regularly review and test the effectiveness of the arrangements.
79. Pupils feel safe, including online. Protocols to keep boarders secure are reviewed regularly.
80. Pupils are confident to speak with the safeguarding team, counselling team, boarding staff, tutors, nurses and matrons. Leaders have introduced further ways for pupils to raise concerns anonymously. Pupils choose a named 'trusted adult' with whom they would share a concern. They know they are listened to. Senior pupils are trained to recognise potential safeguarding issues. Boarders are aware of the identity and contact details of people independent of the school that they can speak with if they are worried.
81. Recruitment checks are undertaken on governors, staff and other adults, according to their role. Leaders had not identified that, under previous arrangements, some prohibition from teaching

checks had not been completed for a few of the visiting music staff. This was rectified immediately during the inspection. Information is now recorded accurately in the school's single central record of appointments (SCR). House staff ensure that they test the suitability of guardians and ask about boarders' experiences when they return from weekend leave.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

82. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	St Lawrence College
Department for Education number	886/6010
Registered charity number	307921
Address	St Lawrence College College Road Ramsgate Kent CT11 7AE
Phone number	01843 572900
Email address	info@slcuk.com
Website	www.slcuk.com
Proprietor	Corporation of St Lawrence College
Chair	Mr Graham Carter
Headteacher	Mr Matthew Brown
Age range	11 to 18
Number of pupils	299
Number of boarding pupils	139
Date of previous inspection	24 to 26 May 2022

Information about the school

83. St Lawrence College is a co-educational day and boarding school. There is a separate junior school on the same site. It is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors.
84. There are four boarding houses. One is for male and female pupils aged 11 to 13, one is for female pupils aged 13 to 18, and two are for male pupils aged 13 to 18.
85. The school has identified 85 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
86. The school has identified English as an additional language for 102 pupils.
87. The school states its aims are to develop a caring, Christian community where every pupil is nurtured, challenged and inspired to flourish within the four strands of development: pastoral, human, spiritual and academic.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

2 to 4 December 2025

88. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

89. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- 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 learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work with pupils and subject leaders
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

90. 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