

# The Abbey College

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspection date</b>	30 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Dawn Taylor
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	26 September 2005

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The Abbey College (the college) provides privately run flexible programmes. These are in both the academic field at pre-university level (IGCSE, A level and Foundation Courses) and in the English language field. All courses are offered on a co-educational and fully residential basis to adults and children aged 14 years and over. The majority of students come from overseas and students can join at any time during a course. Full English language support is available for all overseas academic students. Abbey College also provides Easter and Summer Courses for overseas students. There are separate courses designed for adults (18 years and over), teenagers (12 years to 17 years) and children (eight years to 11 years). The college is set in a 70-acre campus. Accommodation is provided in seven boarding houses and with host families. The Abbey College separates its students on the basis of sex and age. There are separate houses for boys and girls.

### Summary

This was an announced inspection undertaken by one Ofsted inspector. The inspection looked at the key Boarding School National Minimum Standards under the Every Child Matters outcome groups. There were 89 students from 24 countries present at the college. There were 57 boarders aged 14 up to 18 years old on the week of the inspection. All students up to the age of 18 were accommodated in boarding houses within the college grounds.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### Improvements since the last inspection

The college has undertaken significant work to meet recommendations from the previous Commission for Social Care inspection report. The college was asked to review and develop the medication policy to clearly state the procedures for the control, handling and administration of medication and the layout of the sickbay facilities. This work has now been undertaken. Staff have received training in the storage, handling and administration of medication from the School Nurse in line with the revised college policy. The policy is accessible to all staff in the Staff Handbook. These steps help to keep students safe from risks by informing staff of current practice. The college was asked to ensure that evidence of staff vetting checks were maintained on staff files. The college now maintains staff files that contain evidence of written references, interview records and outcomes and direct contact by the college with each referee to verify references. These checks ensure students are protected from unsupervised contact with adults who have not been subject to the college's complete recruitment checking procedures. The college was asked to ensure cleaning staff have access to protective clothing and that action be taken to prevent student access to a garage roof in the college grounds. Staff confirm that they now have access to protective clothing and a fence has been erected to prevent inappropriate access onto the garage roof. These steps ensure the health and safety of staff and students is protected. The college was asked to develop and implement a refurbishment and redecoration plan and a system for monitoring the day-to-day standard of the boarding accommodation. In addition specific work was identified that needed to be undertaken in the boarding accommodation - all toilets and showers to be fitted with locks that can be opened from the outside in an emergency, all bathrooms should have 'one use' towels and soap, all carpets and lino presenting tripping hazards should be replaced, all

bathrooms/showers should be fitted with hooks for towels and all windows presenting a security or health and safety hazard should be fitted with window stays. In the last three years significant work has been undertaken and the refurbishment and redecoration of the college boarding houses is on going. The college has implemented a refurbishment and redecoration plan and hopes that a proposed plan to build a new boarding house might help with the long term aim to fully refurbish all boarding houses. There are now systems in place for monitoring the day-to-day standards of individual rooms. Work to complete the specific recommendations is on going. All communal showers have soap dispensers and hooks. All toilets and showers have locks that can be opened in an emergency from the outside. Carpets and lino that present tripping hazards are being replaced on a rolling rota. Windows presenting a security or health and safety hazard have been fitted with window stays. These steps continue to improve the quality of the boarding accommodation for students.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Students' health and well-being needs are being met through effective services that promote good quality medical treatment and education. Information regarding the health and medical histories of each student is gained as part of the college's admission process through proactive contact with agents and families. This ensures individual's needs are identified. The college Nurse and Welfare Officer co-ordinate effective arrangements that secure medical, dental and optical attention for students as necessary. The staff are trained in the administration of medication and know the college's health education policies and carry these out in their daily contact with students. Students have access to information and guidance with regard to health and social issues. These areas are also addressed formally through the college curriculum.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Students' safety is promoted because staff listen and take appropriate actions to protect them from harm and abuse. However, some aspects relating to policy guidance and training lack detail to ensure that students are fully safeguarded. Students state that the college respects their privacy and confidentiality, that their concerns are listened to and they are supported to behave well. Staff and students know that bullying is not tolerated and that staff act on any information that bullying might be taking place. The policies and student information on behaviour and punishments are clear, however, they do not reflect the college's practice for rewarding students for positive behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour is addressed in a fair and measured way. All staff, except for domestic staff, receive regular in-house child protection training that informs them of the college's procedure. There is a child protection policy, however, this does not reflect new nationally and locally implemented practice and procedures. During the inspection staff booked onto appropriate local authority child protection courses due to run in the next couple of months. The college has a clear complaints procedure and information about this is available to students, parents and members of the public through written material and the college website. Students expressed confidence in the safety and security of the college. Students learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they regularly practice the emergency escape drill and staff receive fire training as part of their induction. Safe procedures are in place to protect students with tests on the fire systems and other electrical equipment taking place at the appropriate intervals. The Fire Service are currently conducting an inspection of Abbey College and are due to give feedback to the college next week. The college will be

required to act on any recommendations made within an agreed timescale. The college operates an established staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate awareness of the need to safeguard students.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Students are benefiting from living in a College where staff are focused on providing individuals with a good range of support and opportunities. Students are encouraged to make the best of their educational opportunities. Students are clear which member of staff they can go to for personal support and the college has clear guidance for staff and boarders about how such support is provided. This includes allocated tutors who ensure students' continual care needs are met and an activities co-ordinator who is developing weekend and evening activities. The college provides an environment where the value of quality and diversity is understood and promoted. Students feel that one of the college's strengths is the opportunities they have to meet students from such a wide range of countries and cultures. The college has established arrangements for supporting students whose first language is not English.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Students are encouraged to contribute to the running of the college so that they feel ownership of the setting and part of college life. Students consider that they benefit from the international community and educational system. They also believe that by effectively communicating with them about matters concerning their own lives, progress and future, the college is helping them to be responsible and independent. The college operates systems to gain students' views about matters affecting their daily lives and the general running of the college. However, although students knew forums existed, they were not all well attended and some issues were still being raised by students. These concerns have been recognised by the college and they are working in partnership with students to raise awareness of consultation processes. New reporting systems have also been implemented to identify students requests and needs. However, staff are not monitoring these records to ensure that requests are being responded to within a reasonable timescale. Students are supported to have appropriate contact with friends and family. The college understands the value and importance of communication and contact with parents. Significant time is taken to build relationships and share information with families and agents from abroad. This year the Principal and staff will be visiting a range of countries where the opportunity will be taken to meet parents and discuss students.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is not judged.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Students' care and educational experience is underpinned by the college's philosophy, values and sound leadership. Abbey College has a Statement of Boarding Practice and Principles, which is clear and concise. The Students Handbook gives all required information to young people and their families on the services available. This includes the philosophy of care and the expectations of the college. The Principal, who is skilled and experienced, provides strong leadership to the students and staff team. He is actively involved in the day to day operation

of the college. Students' welfare is effectively monitored with regular discussions within staff meetings. The Principal provides effective monitoring of relevant records, such as the complaints, child protection and discipline logs. This ensures proper scrutiny of all aspects of the students' care. Any shortfalls in these areas are identified and addressed. This quality monitoring and other similar initiatives contribute to periodic reports to the management team and the college's overall strategic plan.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the child protection policy and whistleblowing policy are developed in line with local and national child protection procedures. (NMS 3.1)
- ensure that all staff including ancillary staff are briefed or are given training on responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse and know what action they should take in response to such suspicions or allegations. (NMS 3.5)
- ensure the written policy for staff and guidance for students are developed to describe reward systems for good behaviour. (NMS 4.2)
- ensure that recommendations made by the Fire Service are adhered to within the agreed timescales. (NMS 26.1)
- ensure systems for encouraging student contribution to the operation and life of the College continue to be promoted. Staff should monitor and respond to the processes put in place to identify any issues or shortfalls raised by students. (NMS 12.2)
- ensure the refurbishment and redecoration plan for the boarding houses continues, with the aim to provide students with satisfactory boarding accommodation. (NMS 40.1)

## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for boarding school

#### Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders' health is promoted (NMS 6)
- safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records (NMS 7)
- boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary (NMS 15)
- boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill (NMS 16)
- boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal problems (NMS 17)
- boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals (NMS 25)
- boarders are suitably accommodated when ill (NMS 48)
- boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered (NMS 49).

**Ofsted considers 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders are protected from bullying (NMS 2)
- boarders are protected from abuse (NMS 3)
- use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate (NMS 4)
- boarders' complaints are responded to appropriately (NMS 5)
- the operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school (NMS 22)
- boarders are protected from the risk of fire (NMS 26)
- the welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school (NMS 28)
- boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities (NMS 29)
- boarders' personal privacy is respected (NMS 37)
- there is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders (NMS 38)
- boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures; all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises are supervised (NMS 39)
- boarders have their own accommodation, which is secure from public intrusion (NMS 41)
- boarders are protected from safety hazards (NMS 47)

**Ofsted considers 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders have access to a range and choice of activities (NMS 11)
- boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination (NMS 18)
- boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands (NMS 27)
- boarders have satisfactory provision to study (NMS 43)
- boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas (NMS 46)



**Ofsted considers 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.**

**Annex A**

## **Making a positive contribution**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school (NMS 12)
- boarders receive personal support from staff (NMS 14)
- boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families (NMS 19)
- new boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in (NMS 21)
- boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school (NMS 30)
- there are sound relationships between staff and boarders (NMS 36)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **Achieving economic well-being**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders' possessions and money are protected (NMS 20)
- boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation (NMS 40)
- boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation (NMS 42)
- boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities (NMS 44)
- boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day (NMS 45)
- boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school (NMS 50)

**Ofsted considers 51 the key standard to be inspected.**

## **Organisation**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- a suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- there is clear leadership of boarding in the school (NMS 8)
- crises affecting boarders' welfare are managed effectively (NMS 9)
- the school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare (NMS 10)
- risk assessment and school record-keeping contribute to boarders' welfare (NMS 23)
- boarders are supervised adequately by staff (NMS 31)
- staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site (NMS 32)
- boarders are adequately supervised at night (NMS 33)
- boarders are looked after by staff which have specific boarding duties, and have received adequate induction and continued training (NMS 34)
- boarders are looked after by staff which follow clear boarding policies and practice (NMS 35)
- the welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 51)
- the welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

**Ofsted considers 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.**