

Bellerbys College

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
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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

Bellerbys College in Brighton is part of StudyGroup, an international education provider with four colleges located in this country. Although also open to British students, the college's primary aim is to provide education for international students, and to prepare them for admission to British universities. Education and accommodation is provided on a purpose built site opened less than two years ago, and which is located in the centre of Brighton. Students are also accommodated within host families recruited from within Brighton and neighbouring areas. The college admits students from the age of 14 upwards, and at the time of the inspection there were approximately 250 students under 18 being accommodated by the college. Students have their own bedrooms and facilities for studying. Boarders under 18 on the college site are accommodated on separate floors with residential supervisors providing support.

Summary

The inspection was carried out on an announced basis, took place over three days, and the college was inspected against all of the key National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS).

The college provides a physical environment for students within which they feel safe, where they have accommodation of a high standard, and where they enjoy positive relationships with fellow students and staff. Provision for students in host families is extremely good, and there is good support within the college provided by the student services department which meets the needs of international students very well.

Health care provision at the college is inadequate, and not all students receive health education as part of their education programme. Recruitment procedures are not being implemented in accordance with the standards, and staff supervision levels are insufficient to adequately monitor the welfare of students. In addition there is no effective forum for students to be able to have a say in the development of the boarding provision.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last monitoring visit carried out in 2006 two recommendations were made. These included the need to ensure that the recruitment records for host families contained all the required information and the need to ensure that the décor in the accommodation was in a good condition.

The recruitment files for host families now contain all the required information and are regularly reviewed and audited to ensure that they are up to date.

The school has moved to new premises since the last visit and these are in very good condition.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

The college has clear written rules which are made explicit to students concerning smoking, alcohol, and drugs, with students reporting these matters to be treated very seriously by staff should anyone break the rules. Help line details are available to students in relation to these three areas, however the college is not proactive in providing guidance, information, or education on these or a wider range of health related matters. There is an extremely good personal, social, and health education programme in operation within the college, but this is being delivered only to GCSE students, and not all education staff are aware of its existence.

All students at the college are assisted in registering with the local GP, and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal health. The college doctor visits for 30 minutes once a week and students can make appointments for themselves to visit the local surgery. Concerns about the college's medical provision were expressed by the college doctor who is of the view that an on site medical centre staffed by qualified nursing staff is needed. The college does not employ a registered nurse on site, and they do not have a sick bay where students can be isolated when unwell. A number of staff are first aid trained, however not all residential supervisors have up to date training. Security staff who maintain a presence on the college site during the evenings and overnight, including within the residential accommodation, are referred within college literature to be first aid trained when in fact they are not. Students are responsible for their own medication, whether purchased or prescribed in this country, or brought with them from their own country. The college does not keep any records of medication that is on site, and there are no written procedures for assessing and recording whether a student is sufficiently responsible to self administer medication. It is the college's policy not to supply or administer any medication to students, however some staff do keep a supply of non prescription medication which is given to students.

The college cafeteria provides freshly cooked meals for students, which are of good quality and which attempt to meet the food requirements of an extremely diverse student population. Students are suitably encouraged to eat healthily and the menu provides a balanced and nutritious diet with healthy and vegetarian options. Special dietary needs are catered for, and there are cultural themes throughout the year to celebrate national holidays in various countries. Students are able to formally make comment on the food provided, by completing comment sheets which are located in the cafeteria. There have been several changes to the menu as a result of comments made, however not all students are aware of this process. Drinks and snacks are also available for students to purchase on site.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The college has a suitable policy on countering bullying, and provides an environment for students within which they feel safe. Students enjoy positive and respectful relationships with fellow students and staff, and bullying is not seen as a problem at all within the college.

The college has a designated person responsible for child protection matters, who has completed appropriate inter agency training, and who cascades training to the staff group. Students feel that they are well protected from harm within the college. The college's child protection policy is not sufficiently detailed to provide staff with the appropriate contact information should they need to take their concerns outside the college to the local Social Services department. Procedures within the policy state quite rightly that concerns of a child protection nature should be passed on to the college's designated person. They then refer to matters being passed on

to the college principal to make the final decision. This is not good practice as the principal has currently not undertaken any child protection inter agency training, and is not a designated person. Ancillary staff do not routinely receive child protection awareness or guidance as part of their induction, and the security staff used to patrol the residential accommodation at night time have not completed any training specific to child protection. The college does not have satisfactory written procedures for the event of a student going missing.

Students are provided with explicit written information about the college rules, and are very aware of the expectations in relation to their behaviour. There is an escalating system used to deal with students who break the rules. This includes providing individual support for students from staff at an early stage, and a proactive approach for enlisting the support of parents when necessary. Students feel fairly treated at the college and their general behaviour is of a very high standard. Major punishments such as suspension or expulsion are at a very low level within the college. These are recorded on individual student records, but there is currently no central record of such being maintained.

Students at the college benefit from having a wide range of people to go to with any concern or personal problem they may have, including support from language counsellors. They are provided with suitable written information in relation to making a complaint, which currently does not include the contact details for Ofsted. There have been no serious complaints received by the college since the previous inspection. Currently there is no system for maintaining a central log of serious complaints.

The provision for fire safety at the college is extremely good. There is a comprehensive and up to date fire risk assessment, evacuation procedures which are clearly displayed in all student rooms and throughout the college and checks and tests of fire safety equipment are being carried out and recorded as required. Students are well aware of the evacuation procedures, with practice drills being carried out regularly. A number of staff have completed specific fire safety training, and there are no outstanding recommendations of the fire authority.

The college has recruitment procedures for staff, however the implementation of these is not being effectively monitored, and as such they are not providing adequate safeguards for the welfare of students. Records showed Criminal Records Bureau checks were being carried out as required, but that in some cases curriculum vitae had not been submitted, and for a significant number there were no references on record.

Students at the college benefit from very good provision for health and safety. They have their own rooms which they are able to lock, their privacy is respected, and very good security arrangements ensure there is no unauthorised or unsupervised access to boarding accommodation. There are clear systems for managing risk across the college, including a comprehensive risk assessment for the premises which is clearly linked to the welfare of students. A comprehensive health and safety policy is in place and all policy and procedures documents relating to health and safety are currently being reviewed. Staff and students are made well aware of their responsibilities in relation to maintaining a safe environment at the college, and audits of the premises are carried out twice yearly by the facilities manager. Ancillary staff who are responsible for cleaning students rooms receive specific training on health and safety matters, as well as drugs awareness. The college has an effective system for reporting maintenance matters requiring attention. There were no hazards to the welfare of students or staff observed during the course of the inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Students at the college benefit from having a wide range of people to whom they can turn to for personal guidance, or with a personal problem. As an established international college, Bellerbys has an acute awareness of the difficulties encountered by overseas students, and provides extremely good levels of support from the moment students arrive in the country. The college's student services department employs a number of staff who provide extremely good support which meets the ongoing and varied needs of international students. This includes several language counsellors, and individual staff who deal with travel arrangements, the organisation of recreational activities, and specific support for students in host families. In addition there is a welfare officer with specific responsibility for the under 18 students, programme managers and personal tutors available during the educational day, and residential supervisors whose responsibility is to monitor under 18 student welfare in the college accommodation.

The college provides an inclusive environment within which students representing more than 50 different nationalities exist in harmony, and where their cultural differences are embraced. There is good provision for special dietary and religious observance requirements, a wide range of activities are available to all students, and there are regular events where cultural differences are shared and celebrated. Suitable support is available for students whose first language is not English, and includes several language counsellors who are available during the education day.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Students enjoy positive relationships with staff and feel confident in approaching them with matters concerning their welfare. There is however no effective system for enabling students to contribute their views about the boarding provision. There are currently student representatives from each floor who meet briefly with the residential supervisors and student services director every three weeks. This system does not successfully provide students with a forum to express their views, as those spoken to were not aware of its existence.

There is very good provision for enabling students to maintain contact with their families and friends. The great majority of students have their own mobile phones, and for those that don't there are payphones available within the residential accommodation. Wireless internet connection is provided across the college with e-mail being the most common form of communication with students' home countries. Computer facilities are provided within the college's 'internet suite', and the majority of students have their own laptops. In addition, Study Group has offices in several countries from which significant numbers of students originate. These offices help to facilitate communication between the college and parents, a number of whom have appointed agents. Parents are kept suitably informed of matters concerning their children's welfare and are welcome to visit the college at any time.

The college makes good provision for new students right from the moment they arrive at the airport, where staff in Bellerbys t-shirts are there to greet them. A structured induction process provides students with comprehensive written information, while a tour of the college and an orientation walk around Brighton provide valuable visual references. Presentations by various

staff ensure students are aware of practical safety issues, how they can obtain support from student services, and covers important practical matters such as registering with the local doctor and opening a bank account. More experienced residential students provide support for new students.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The purpose built college site provides a good standard of accommodation for students, with specific floors allocated for those students under the age of 18. There are only two shared rooms, so the overwhelming majority of students benefit from single rooms, all of which have en-suite shower facilities. All rooms are centrally heated, have large windows providing natural light, and are fitted out with modern furnishings. Students are provided with keys and are able to lock their rooms. The rooms provide a comfortable environment for students within which they have adequate storage, suitable facilities enabling them to be able to study in private and including internet access. All floors have common rooms with large screen televisions, and there is an 'internet suite' and large common room facility available on the ground floor for residential students during the evening. The college arranges for students' rooms to be cleaned on a weekly basis, and there is an effective system for reporting any damage or breakages that occur. The accommodation includes three rooms which are suitably adapted for students with disabilities. At the time of the inspection there were no students with a disability being accommodated at the college, although there have been since the new site was opened.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The college provides prospective students and their parents with extremely good information prior to students arriving in this country. Study Group has offices in several countries, with agents acting as go betweens to facilitate good communication between the college and parents. The college has a very informative website, there are a range of documents providing comprehensive written information, and all students receive a 'welcome pack' during their induction day. This contains important information about the college and how it operates, as well as very valuable information about living in England, and some of the cultural differences.

The promotion of equality and diversity at the college is extremely good. There is an inclusive environment within which all students are treated as equals and where the cultural diversity of the student population is valued by students and suitably celebrated.

Systems are in place across the college which facilitate good communication between staff and which support the monitoring of student welfare. The principal manages serious issues concerning complaints and disciplinary matters, which are at a very low level, while the facilities manager effectively monitors health and safety matters including risk assessments and accident reporting. Child protection concerns are dealt with appropriately, however there is no effective monitoring of recruitment procedures being carried out.

The college employs residential supervisors and assistant supervisors on each floor who are responsible for the welfare of students between the hours of 18:00 to 09:00. One supervisor is on duty on each floor at any one time, with over 70 students on each of the second and third floors, and approximately 30 of the younger students on the fourth floor. This level of supervision is insufficient to effectively monitor and promote the welfare of students, some of

whom may need additional support. Supervisors have good communication across the college in relation to student welfare matters, and meet regularly as a group with the student services director. There is currently however no structured induction specific to the role of residential supervisor, and no residential staff handbook. Training on child protection and first aid is provided for supervisors, but not all first aid training is up to date. Students are subject to curfew times which vary according to age, and all under 18 students have to report to their supervisor once during each evening. Curfew times are monitored by security staff who are employed by the college to ensure the safety and protection of students, and who patrol the residential accommodation during the late evening and through the night.

Host families used by the college are subject to a comprehensive recruitment process and safety checks and references are taken before they begin to have students within their homes. As a part of the process the host family homes are viewed as to the appropriateness of the environment. All host families that were seen during the inspection were seen to have gone through the recruitment process and have excellent facilities for the students.

Host families offer a wide range of different placements and the school try to match the students to the families taking in account their wants and specific needs. There is a system in place for the students to complain and be asked to move, this could be seen to have been acted on quickly and appropriately.

Host families are supplied with excellent information and guidance with each new student and for those under 16 they are given a care plan, as part of the pack the host families are also given guidance related to child protection.

The school has a monitoring system in place and host family homes are checked annually and the family fill in a new information sheet to up date the school as to any changes of circumstance.

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 that the college's personal, social, and health education programme is delivered to a wider range of students. NMS 6.
- carry out a review of the college's health care provision, in conjunction with a suitably qualified health professional, to include policies and procedures for the management and administration of medication, and health promotion. NMS 15.
- ensure there are written procedures for assessing students who wish to self medicate, and that written records are maintained of any assessment carried out. NMS 15.

- ensure that all supervisors are suitably first aid trained. NMS 15.
- ensure that all ancillary staff receive child protection guidance as part of their induction. NMS 3.
- review and update the child protection policy to include contact details for the LADO(local authority designated officer), and procedures for staff to follow should the college's designated person or principal be subject to allegations of abuse. NMS 3.
- ensure that the college principal undertakes appropriate inter agency child protection training. NMS 3.
- ensure a policy and procedures document is in place for the event of a student going missing. NMS 3.
- maintain a central record of major punishments administered to students. NMS 4.
- maintain a central record of serious written complaints. NMS 5.
- ensure that the college's recruitment procedures are in accord with the national minimum standards, and are implemented appropriately for all staff. NMS 38.
- ensure an effective system is in place for students to be able to contribute their views on the operation of the boarding provision. NMS 12.
- ensure that there is effective monitoring of staff recruitment procedures. NMS 23.
- review staffing arrangements to ensure there is appropriate supervision of students at all times. NMS 31.
- provide a structured induction and ongoing training opportunities for residential supervisors. NMS
- provide residential supervisors with a staff handbook containing policies and procedures relating to the welfare provision for boarding students. NMS 35.