

Kelly College

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Jennifer Reed / Michelle Oxley
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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

Kelly College is an independent, co-educational school for pupils aged between 11 and 18 years of age, run by the Kelly College Foundation. It is a boarding school which also welcomes day pupils. The Kelly College Foundation also operates Kelly College Preparatory School, which provides education to younger children. A small number of the preparatory school's pupils are weekly boarders and they reside in Kelly College's junior boarding house.

The boarding community at Kelly College includes full and weekly boarders, with the majority of pupils coming from the UK; there are also a small number of international students. Additionally, Kelly College offers a flexi-boarding provision, enabling day pupils to stay in the boarding houses when particular needs arise. Boarding accommodation is provided within five boarding houses which are located on the college campus. Conway House is the junior boarding house and accommodates both girls and boys. At 13 years of age, boarders move on to one of the four senior boarding houses. Each house has its own character and varies in age and design. Marwood and Newton Houses accommodate senior girls; School and Courtenay Houses take senior boys. Each house has a housemaster or housemistress in residence, a resident matron, at least one resident house tutor and team of allocated tutors.

Summary

This was an announced inspection of Kelly College and the school was assessed against the national minimum standards for boarding schools. This inspection found that the college provides a good quality of boarding provision, with some outstanding features.

Kelly College is committed to providing pupils with a safe and supportive environment where boarders are able to develop social and life skills within a secure and structured community. Leadership and management is strong and the college demonstrates a robust and positive approach to improvement. Safeguarding is given a high priority. Boarders benefit from the outstanding standard of pastoral care and the sound boarding practices are underpinned by comprehensive policies and procedures. Boarders feel safe and they are well looked after by the experienced and competent staff group. Boarders' health and welfare is well promoted and boarders enjoy taking part in the excellent range of recreational and sporting activities available to them. Each boarding house has its own character and boarders enjoy participating in the inclusive boarding environment within the well integrated school community.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the school has made improvements in six areas and all previous recommendations have been satisfactorily met. This includes: ensuring all ancillary staff receive regular child protection training; maintaining staff training records; ensuring recruitment and selection procedures take up references, qualifications are verified and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks have been received before employment commences; providing suggestion boxes for boarders to use to raise any concerns; ensuring all final exit doors in boarding houses are alarmed; and providing suitable staffing arrangements to meet the needs of preparatory school boarders.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The college delivers a personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme to pupils as part of the curriculum. The programme can be adjusted to address arising issues, for example, the safe use of social network sites. Pupils receive appropriate advice and guidance on the risks of alcohol, drugs, smoking and sexual health and the programme is tailor-made for different age groups. The college has clear policies and procedures to deal with countering risks to health, including a drug screening programme which can be undertaken with parental consent should such concerns be raised. The school nurse and the boarding house matrons also offer boarders and parents information and education about likely health risks. Pupils may also choose to see the school counsellor for confidential help and support with particular issues.

Boarders' health is promoted by the sound medical practices evidenced within the college. For example, the college seeks medical history and parental consent for first aid and medical treatment prior to a boarder's admission. Any boarder with specific health needs is closely monitored and the college completes a 'medical alert' form to ensure that all staff know how to appropriately deal with an episode of illness. The college nurse, who is also the matron of School House, holds current nursing registration and works closely with the other boarding matrons. All boarding staff complete training in first aid. Each house has their own matron who provides first aid, deals with minor ailments and looks after boarders when they are feeling unwell. Ill boarders either stay within their own room or within the sick bay in the boarding house. However, only one house has a call system in place to enable boarders to summon assistance. Boarders in the other houses say that their matrons are always nearby and shouting for help works well. However, these arrangements do not provide boarders with dedicated nearby toilets and washing facilities and ill boarders have to use facilities that are in general use; this could pose a health risk to other boarders. The systems in place in each house support the safe administration, recording and storage of medication for those boarders assessed as needing support in taking their medicines. Boarders are only permitted to keep their own medication with the agreement of parents and after matron has checked that the boarder fully understands how to safely self-medicate. Boarders who keep their own home remedies hold them securely in lockable storage.

Boarders are registered with the local doctor's surgery which provides good support to the college nurse. Three doctors, two female and one male doctor, undertake a twice weekly surgery at the school; alternatively, boarders can visit the practice on the other days if the matter is urgent. Boarders can choose to see a doctor alone, or be accompanied by the nurse or matron. Appointments are made with local dentists or the optician if any problem is identified. A matron is in attendance at sporting fixtures to provide rapid medical support if needed. Survey responses show that 92% of boarders say they are always or usually looked after when they are unwell and they are well cared for. One parent said, 'my children are looked after very well'; one boarder commented 'matron is fantastic!'

The quality and quantity of the meals provided to boarders is good. Food is locally sourced where possible and meals include fresh fruit and vegetables. Meals provide a balanced and nutritious diet and a good range of options. Boarders have a choice of main courses at lunch and dinner, including a daily vegetarian option, baked potatoes, a pasta bar and a salad bar. In addition, fresh fruit and healthy desserts, including yoghurt are provided, or boarders can consume the alternative options of puddings and cake. The catering team sensitively manages

special dietary requirements by finding ways to provide special diets to pupils without stigmatisation, for example, providing beef rather than pork sausages to meet religious needs. The implications of food allergies are clearly understood and well managed to ensure every pupils' health is promoted. The dining hall provides suitable facilities for boarders to enjoy their food and meal times are organised to reduce unnecessary queues. Boarders can return to their boarding houses at break and lunchtimes where they are able to make themselves snacks from the provisions supplied to the boarding kitchens.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Boarders are protected and their welfare is promoted by the robust policies and procedures in place, which are known to pupils, parent and staff. The college takes a zero tolerance stance to bullying and any incident is taken very seriously by staff. In boarders' survey responses, 9% identified that they had at sometime been bullied; no-one said they had been bullied 'a lot'. However, during the inspection, boarders said that bullying was very rare in the boarding houses and they were confident that any such action would be effectively dealt with by their house-parents.

Boarders also reported that they felt safe living in the college; 92% of boarders said the staff who looked after them always or usually protected them from harm. Safeguarding within the college is given a high priority and there is a strong commitment to keeping children safe. All college staff receive regular child protection training and the college's designated child protection co-ordinator demonstrates a good knowledge of safeguarding policies and practices. The college effectively liaises with local safeguarding networks to ensure pupils' well-being. Two parents commented, 'pupils are happy, safe and secure'; and, 'there is good supervision of students and they live in a protected environment'.

Effective security measures are in place to prevent unauthorised access to boarding accommodation. Every entry door is protected by a keypad lock and the code is changed at least once per term. There are restrictors on windows and the buildings are protected at night by intruder alarms. Security lighting is provided during the hours of darkness and CCTV is used at various locations within the college grounds. The college has a clearly stated policy on the restriction of access to the general public and this is implemented in practice. These measures do not impinge on boarders' privacy which is protected by the clear policies and sound boarding practices in each house. Staff seek permission to enter bedrooms and toilet and bathing facilities provide sufficient privacy.

The positive behaviour management strategies employed by the college help pupils to learn from their misdemeanours and be accountable for their own actions. Boarders understand the disciplinary system and consider that punishments are fairly administered. They particularly appreciate the positive reinforcements for good behaviour and enjoy receiving commendations. Parents also believe that the college delivers good disciplinary practice; one parent summarised this as, 'boarders are given the space to grow as an individual but also are given boundaries'. Parents and pupils receive detailed information about how to raise any concern that they may have and any complaint made to the college is appropriately recorded and dealt with in a timely manner.

A head of house and boarding prefects are appointed each year for every boarding house. Senior boarders are chosen by their house-parent for their individual qualities and suitability

to take, and successfully deliver, a leadership role within the house. Boarding prefects undertake assigned duties, for example, the supervision of prep and checking that boarders settle and arise at the appropriate times. Any disciplinary issues are referred to the house-parent for action and such responsibility is not given to the senior boarders. The boarding prefects and the head of house are viewed very positively by the other boarders, who report that they are helpful and supportive in the house.

The college's robust approach to health and safety matters contribute to promoting boarders' welfare and keeping them safe. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken and scrutinised to ensure they are sufficiently rigorous and effectively identify potential hazards and the measures to be taken to limit possible risks. The college makes appropriate checks on electrical equipment, including undertaking portable appliance testing for boarders' personal electrical items. Fire precautions are in place and the requisite checks and drills are carried out on a regular basis, ensuring that boarders and staff know how to safely evacuate the buildings in an emergency.

The college has recently established a recruitment and selection system that meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools and it is in accordance with safer recruitment guidelines. This system is yet to be fully embedded and effectively implemented and is assessed by this inspection as 'work in progress'. Although recent recruitment processes are much improved, insufficient rigour has been given to seeking explanations for any gaps in employment identified within application forms. Currently, the college is demonstrating good practice by undertaking a full audit of past recruitment processes and taking any identified measures that are required to ensure each personnel file contains the relevant information. The college ensures that every member of staff is checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and senior staff do not allow individuals to commence work until the check is completed and the college assesses the applicant as suitable to be employed to work with children.

Procedures in place help to protect boarders from unsupervised contact at the college with adults who have not been subject to the college's complete recruitment checking procedures. For example, all resident spouses and regular visiting family members of staff working in the boarding houses have been CRB checked. In addition, all resident staff sign a declaration to show that they understand and agree how they must supervise any visitors to their personal accommodation and restrict their access to boarders. All adult visitors to boarding houses are asked to sign in at that particular house and are kept under appropriate staff supervision; all visitors to the college are required to sign in at reception and wear a visitor's badge for the duration of their time on the campus.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Outside of academic lessons, boarders have structured prep times throughout the week and access to an excellent range of recreational and sporting activities. Although sport is a strong feature of Kelly College, care is taken not to over emphasise the success of sporting achievements. Boarders have good access to other extra-curricular activities and are encouraged to develop their individual skills, talents and interests in all areas. At weekends, there are sporting fixtures and a programme of activities, primarily aimed for junior boarders to enjoy. Cultural trips of interest are occasionally arranged for the international students. During the inspection, many boarders were busy rehearsing for a college play and a musical event. Boarders report that film nights are a great favourite, alongside the sixth form social evenings, house

events and free time. Two boarders illustrated their enjoyment of activities by saying, 'there is lots to do and I really enjoy everything at Kelly'; and the 'Devizes to Westminster race is hard work, but good fun'.

A number of boarders are training toward attaining Olympic swimming standards and rise just before five o'clock to start their training before breakfast. The 'swimmers' report that this is their choice and they have high aspirations to achieve their goal. Staff closely monitor their welfare and ensure that these boarders are not over-committed and their well-being is not compromised by onerous schedules and conflicting demands on their time. Accommodation within boarding is arranged to ensure that the early risers do not adversely affect other boarders' rest, and conversely, they can choose to go to bed early.

Boarders receive excellent personal support from staff and boarders can identify a number of staff members they feel confident in approaching for any help or advice they may need. Parental surveys highlighted the outstanding pastoral care provided by the college. For example, one parent said, 'pastoral care is excellent; there are plenty of different people to contact if needed and there is always someone available to talk to'. The strong pastoral care is underpinned by robust policies and procedures, the tutor system and competent boarding staff, ensuring that boarders are well supported on an individual basis. Additional support is also available from the senior management team, medical staff, the school counsellor and the ESL (English as a second language) department. Staff are sensitive to the needs of boarders whose parents may be at risk employed overseas. Should a boarder wish to talk to someone external to the school, notice-boards provide contact numbers for Childline, Ofsted and the college's independent listener. Many boarders said that they respected the advice of their friends, senior pupils, boarding prefects and heads of house. The inspectors asked the boarders to describe their boarding house and they emphasised the prevailing family atmosphere. Boarders' comments included, 'we are all sisters in one big family; and 'Courtenay United, one family'.

The college offers outstanding support to pupils with disabilities and the school community embraces diversity. Particular features are the support given to the para-Olympian swimmers and the use of the physiotherapy room to meet individual health needs. The college has undertaken building work to improve accessibility for disabled pupils and provided suitable facilities, including video-conferencing. Difference is celebrated at Kelly and the inclusive school community acknowledges and respects the individual, irrespective of class, race or gender. The ESL department provide good support to overseas students and helps boarders talk about their own lives and culture and compare this with English ways. International boarders are given the opportunity to prepare their own special food at weekends and this occasionally becomes a social event involving pupils from different houses. The college staff recognises the importance of different cultural and religious celebrations and makes suitable arrangements to enable boarders to follow their chosen religious beliefs and to meet any special dietary needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

In accordance with the college's mission statement, 'to give pupils a thorough preparation for life', boarders are able to contribute their views and have their say about the running of boarding provision. There are both formal and informal opportunities for participation, consultation and expressing personal opinion. Some boarding houses have an elected house council, with representatives from each year group; others have a house council that includes a representative

from each tutor group, or alternatively, there may be no council operating at all. Each house has a representative who sits on the school council and they raise boarders' issues that impact on the whole school community. In addition, there are suggestion boxes in each house and in the main college for anonymous contributions. Boarders said, 'the suggestion box works well and things we ask for happen most of the time'. Examples given included the provision of regulated wireless internet access and improved kitchen facilities. Senior boarders are encouraged to take on pastoral and leadership responsibilities in their house and contribute to the running of the house. Boarders said, 'we can talk to our house prefects and head of house about anything'. Sixth form boarders also participate in organising social events. The boarding environment enables each individual young person to take part in house events and everyone's contribution is respected and valued. Survey responses show that 70% of boarders said they could always, or usually have a say about things; a further 26% said they could sometimes. Many boarders' views are summarised by this one comment made, 'I just talk to my housemaster about anything'. This was found to be the boarders' preferred method of contribution which tended to bring about a more immediate response.

Pupils help with school tours for prospective pupils and their parents and the college has a formal process of induction for new boarders. An appointed 'sponsor' or buddy, who is usually a pupil of similar age in their house, helps new boarders to settle in by providing a 'peer perspective'. Prior to their admission, new boarders receive the house handbook which contains detailed information about house rules and procedures. New pupils' parents are invited to an informal reception after the first half of term to meet staff and discuss boarders' progress with their tutors. One parent said, 'the welcome programme is good'.

Boarders are able to maintain contact with their families and friends. Although there are public phone booths in each house, these are rarely used by boarders who prefer to use their own mobile phones or the house-parent's phone. Many boarders use the internet to contact their family and friends by email, or via network sites. Parents are also welcome to call the school or visit the boarding houses. Boarders have sufficient free time to meet with their friends, including those who may live in other boarding houses.

There are excellent relationships between staff and boarders, demonstrating trust and open communication. Boarders say they are well looked after and treated fairly; they generally like their boarding staff a lot! For example, boarders spoken with in separate houses believed their housemaster to 'be the best'. Boarders emphasised the friendliness of their boarding houses and the good relationships that also exist between boarders. Comments by boarders included, 'all pupils look out for each other and they are encouraged to do so; there is a sense of belonging'; and 'staff are extremely caring and have a sense of humour'. Parental survey responses also noted the good communication and positive relationships with college staff.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The boarding houses have satisfactory systems in place to ensure that boarders' possessions and money are protected. Boarders are encouraged not to keep large sums of money in their possession and can deposit money with house staff for safe-keeping. All boarders have access to lockable storage for their valuables.

The five boarding houses differ in age, design, provision and condition. The two houses accommodating senior girls provide a good standard of accommodation which the female

boarders enjoy living in. Conway, the junior boarding house, and Courtenay, housing senior boys, both provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation which would benefit from further modernisation and refurbishment. However, one boarder summed up the boy's perspective on this matter; he said, 'we don't mind that it is shabby, it's a boarding house!' The only improvement boarders identified was their wish for the 'push button' showers to be replaced by showers with controllable water discharge. Boarders can personalise their rooms and the boarding houses benefit from the artwork and innovative decoration and carvings provided by past and current boarders. Each house is allocated a budget each term and boarders can request small items for the house. The college recognises the need for improvement in the accommodation provided within the older boarding houses and some refurbishment has been undertaken. However, School House, one of the original buildings, generally provides a poor standard of accommodation, with much of the furniture, carpets and facilities being worn and in need of replacement. Toilet and bathroom facilities are also in need of updating. The inspection identified several hazards therein, for example, loose and jagged tiles; these issues were immediately addressed and remedied by the college during the inspection. Several parents commented on the poor standard of accommodation in this particular boarding house; however, most of the boys in School House did not raise any concerns at all about the standard of their accommodation. All boarders spoken with showed great loyalty to their houses and considered they were living in the 'best house'. One parent said, 'each house has a strong identity which is a positive influence'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Parents and boarders are provided with clear information about the operation of the college and boarding provision. The Kelly College parent and pupil handbook is regularly updated and provides a comprehensive account of daily life within the college; information can also be accessed on the college website. The handbook is available in English and German and the college is planning to produce a suitable edition for Asian pupils. In addition, each boarding house has their own unique handbook, which gives boarders detailed information and a real flavour about life in that particular boarding house, including expectations of behaviour. The organisation of boarding houses provides appropriate protection and separation of boarders by age and gender.

Leadership and management within the college is strong, with clear lines of accountability and responsibility which contribute to the sound promotion and safeguarding of boarders' welfare. Furthermore, the college governors have systems in place to monitor welfare provision in the school. The effective communication systems within the college and a 'hands on' senior management approach to boarding practice, enables each boarding house to be an independent unit whilst ensuring boarding houses share common values and procedures. Senior staff are well respected and staff morale and commitment is high, contributing to the excellent individual care provided to boarders. Senior members of staff regularly monitor the college's records of risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents and take appropriate action to deal with identified issues. Risk assessment is rigorous; however, the college does not proactively undertake written risk assessments for specific medical conditions that individual boarders may have. To date, this omission has not adversely impacted on boarder's health as the responsive 'medical alert' system in place provides information to staff that helps to reduce any likely risk to individual boarders.

There are satisfactory supervision arrangements and sufficient levels of staffing which ensure that boarders are at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff, including times when boarders move between different venues on the campus during the evening. Satisfactory record keeping ensures that boarders' welfare is promoted and parents are kept informed of significant events. Generally, parents report that communication between boarding and families is effective; however, some overseas parents noted that information about excursions and events needed to be given earlier to enable sufficient time to plan travel arrangements. Boarders' survey responses showed that 92% of boarders were always or usually satisfied with Kelly College.

All new staff complete a robust induction training programme and individuals do not take responsibility for undertaking boarding duties until they are able to competently carry them out. Staff follow the college's clear boarding policies and principles of boarding practice and complete training in core areas; for example, first aid, child protection, fire awareness and recording. Further training and professional development opportunities are available to staff, including Boarding School Association courses, helping staff to look after boarders well. The college recognises the need for, and plans to introduce, more formal supervision and appraisal processes for boarding staff. However, staff working in the boarding provision say that they receive good support and informal supervision from house-parents; they are able to approach senior staff with any concern or request for advice about how to best meet boarders' needs.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The college demonstrates a strong commitment to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination in any form. Staff and pupils demonstrate a positive regard for diversity; differences are accepted and celebrated, contributing to a well integrated school community.

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):

- provide a designated room or rooms for the isolation of sick boarders when necessary, with its own toilet and washing facilities nearby [National Minimum Standard 48]
- ensure the school's system for recruiting staff who will work with boarders, includes all points raised in this standard before appointment, which can be verified from recruitment records [National Minimum Standard 38]
- ensure the furnishing of all boarding houses is suitable, comfortable and in a satisfactory condition and the accommodation is adequately maintained [National Minimum Standard 40]

- provide adequate toilet and washing facilities in all boarding houses [National Minimum Standard 44]
- complete written risk assessments for specific medical conditions to ensure that reasonable preventative actions are taken to reduce any likely or identified risks to health [National Minimum Standard 23]