

Felixstowe International College

Independent school standard inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Although this is a boarding school, no inspection of boarding provision was carried out at this time.

Information about the school

Felixstowe International College (FIC) is located near the centre of Felixstowe. It was established in 1995 and caters for up to 32 students, aged nine to 18 years. They are placed there by families from other countries. The vast majority come from Korea and attend the college for up to 12 months or sometimes beyond this time. Many are sons and daughters of missionaries based in Tanzania. All students are boarders and are learning English as an additional language. They attend to learn English and, for some, to prepare them to continue at British schools following their time at Felixstowe. At the time of this inspection, nearly all of the 20 students on roll were Korean and a very small number were of Syrian origin. Their ages ranged from nine to 17 years. Most of the current students started at the college in October 2011 and arrived speaking little or no English. None of the students has any special educational needs and/or disability.

The college also admits foreign students who are older than 18 years. These undertake pre-university English courses. They are not on the college roll but do undertake lessons in the college and live in the boarding accommodation. There were three such Korean students placed at the college at the time of the inspection.

The college's values are based on the Christian faith, although students from other nationalities and religions are welcomed. The college states that its aims are: 'to enable students to become fluent in English; to become familiar with English independent education; and to give students the experience of living in a boarding community which has a family atmosphere.'

The college had a full inspection of education and boarding in 2008. During 2009 two visits were held to follow up the college's progress in relation to welfare regulations.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education is outstanding and students make outstanding progress, particularly in English. This is because teaching is excellent; staff are highly knowledgeable and provide a wide variety of ways to help students learn. Their learning is assessed very thoroughly and they are given precise guidance on how to improve. Students' personal development is outstanding, as is their behaviour, and they develop into very well-rounded, confident young people ready for their next stage of education. Welfare, health and safety, including the college's safeguarding arrangements, are inadequate. Improvement in the education of students has been good since the last inspection; while there has been some improvement in welfare, a number of regulations remain unmet in this and other areas.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding because it is so well tailored to the students' needs and closely reflects the college's aims and values. It is very well constructed so that aspects complement each other, ensuring that it has a strong impact on students' academic progress as well as their personal development. As a result of this, and outstanding teaching, students thoroughly enjoy their life and learning at the college.

The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and all the required areas of learning and related planning are provided. The college capitalises very well on the short time the students are there to provide intensive programmes which well exceed recommended taught time. There is good balance between practical and performance activities, and other academic subjects. A significant strength is the way the understanding and use of English is promoted through all activities.

At the core of the curriculum is the teaching of English, where the highly structured and systematic approach to reading, writing, understanding and speaking is extremely successful. This is partly why students' progress is so good. Students also readily learn to use their skills in English and apply them in different contexts which helps them to express their feelings and views, such as on English literature, interpersonal relationships, culture and British culture in particular. The college is adept at integrating a wide variety of themes and topics into the English course so that through English lessons the students learn about many topics, as diverse as British history and first aid. Some students also undertake International GCSE examinations (IGCSE) in English and others have the opportunity to take preliminary English tests.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education is a significant strength because in addition to being taught separately, the subject also pervades lessons and activities in other subjects, as well as life during the evening in boarding. In addition, youth leadership, Duke of Edinburgh Award activities, and a Young Apprentice course give students excellent opportunities to develop leadership skills, teamwork and problem solving strategies.

Other courses include mathematics and double science, which can also lead to IGCSE or GCSE respectively. Music is taught and some students have individual instrumental tuition, often becoming accomplished musicians and reaching high levels in national practical examinations. There are a vast number of extra-curricular activities and visits, often as part of the boarding provision, occasionally to other countries. These support students' understanding of British and foreign cultures and social cohesion.

Progress is outstanding. This is because students learn rapidly due to outstanding teaching and assessment and most become fluent in English. Work is very regularly adjusted so that those who can do harder work are enabled to do so and those that need help have the necessary support. Those who undertake public examinations in English, mathematics and double science consistently do well from their starting points with nearly all students in the last three years attaining A* to C grades and the majority attaining higher A* to A passes. This shows excellent progress, considering the short time students are in the college.

Teaching is underpinned by very thorough ongoing assessment in lessons. Probing questioning, very well tailored for individuals, provides maximum challenge for students and explores thoroughly how well they are learning. Feedback is nearly always immediate and students are given very good guidance on what they need to do next to improve their work or learning. Occasionally, staff do not always use the widest possible range of strategies to assess the whole group's learning. Students get very thorough individual verbal evaluations in relation to what they need to do and they record notes of the evaluations in their diaries. All this is supplemented by regular formal and informal testing and weekly tutorials. This gives staff a clear view of how students are performing against examination or curriculum criteria.

Other key features of teaching are the very wide variety of ways staff use to support learning, the very active involvement in students in their learning, and the precise way work is matched to their individual needs. The pace of lessons is often rapid with frequent changes of activities, which is very important as some lessons are two hours long. Story board activities combine visual as well as written responses and are thoroughly enjoyed by all. Formal grammar is taught in a very structured but 'fun' way so students learn extremely well. Students make really good use of their electronic dictionaries. Although resources are adequate overall, occasionally in science scientific ideas are not always reinforced as well as they could be because of a lack of practical equipment.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy learning; they show great resilience and always apply themselves very diligently to do their very best.

Students' induction to the college and boarding is a key strength in the success of their placement. This leads to them understanding fully the college's aims, values

and expectations, as well as being introduced to the cultural approaches to living and being educated in Britain. Staff and 'induction buddies' are excellent role models and students feel they are very well prepared for college life. As a result of this, and ongoing team building among students, the college is a harmonious community where relationships between students and with staff are excellent and great respect for others is developed. In addition, there is no bullying.

Students' behaviour is outstanding; their attendance is virtually 100%, and their attitudes to learning are excellent. They respond positively to the high expectations of staff and the college's code; they are clear about the consequences of their actions. Community cohesion is a strength of the college and as one student says 'We are like one big family'. The curriculum provides many different ways for students to develop a very strong knowledge of public institutions. There are good links with the local community; for example students use the adjacent sports centre and attend worship on Sundays. There are termly concerts where local residents are invited or where students visit community organisations and students work in the local charity shops as part of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

Students have an excellent understanding of their own culture and that of others. They interact well and accord dignity and respect to other's values and beliefs.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Students report that they feel safe and secure at the college. However, the provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is inadequate.

Good attention is given to sport and fitness. The quality of food is high and the college has a five-star environmental health assessment of its catering facilities. The students are highly aware of the college's expectations of how they should behave and the sanctions that can be imposed for wrong-doing. They do their utmost to comply. First aid requirements are met, staff are trained and some are qualified nurses. There are now adequate risk assessments in place for off-site visits, for the college building and for activities.

The college's arrangements for safeguarding do not meet requirements. This is because the otherwise detailed policy has omissions in relation to staff training. It names the Principal (who is also the proprietor) as the lead person for child protection when this person has not been trained. Not all staff have completed the basic safeguarding training. A lack of staff training was identified at the time of the last inspection and during the subsequent monitoring visits. Two other designated child protection staff have been trained at the higher level. There are no Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks on the post-18 students who live in the college and attend lessons. This is also a requirement of the boarding standards. The procedures for dealing with any allegations against staff name the vice-Principal as the person to deal with allegations against the Principal. This is inappropriate as there is a close family relationship between the two.

A suitable fire risk assessment has been undertaken and clear fire prevention procedures are identified. However, these are not followed. Regular evening fire drills take place, although there have been no evacuations during the college day for over a year. For the last month there have been no recorded checks on emergency lighting or the fire alarm.

The college diligently records its hazardous cleaning chemicals and documents the procedures to follow when using these. However, the chemicals used in science have been omitted from the list. Security of these is reasonable, although the store-room does not have a hazard sign on the door. The college utilises shared cloth towels for hand drying in staff toilets when paper towels, for hygiene purposes, should be used. During the inspection, there were no towels in the students' washrooms and little evidence that the sinks had been used for hand washing. A bathroom in the college is no longer used and wooden plinths have been placed over the sink and bath so the room can be used for storage. There is now an unpleasant smell emanating from the room.

The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are not met because there is no current disability access improvement plan. The admission register does not meet regulations because the names of students are not able to be listed alphabetically.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All regulations except one are met. The required checks are carried out on the college's staff and proprietors, including good conduct checks on staff where appropriate. The single central register contains all the required information. The college was advised that the generic type of medical checks it currently makes on staff before appointment must only be carried out after a post has been offered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Premises and accommodation at the school

While there are a number of strengths with regard to the accommodation, such as the amount of space for boarding, three regulations are unmet. There is sufficient accommodation for the numbers of students overall. There are a few specialist areas such as for ICT and art and a large common room which can be used for drama. There are no specialist facilities for science; the college FIC utilised previously for this purpose has now closed. The college makes good use of the local community, including the sports centre and library. However, there are some inadequate security arrangements at the college. Attention was also drawn to two fire exits that were blocked during the inspection. The standard of maintenance and decoration is inadequate. While many areas are satisfactory there are others which are in poor condition and have rotten woodwork.

Provision of information

Two regulations are unmet. Parents receive regular information about how their children are performing and a reasonably detailed end of year report. There is regular communication via email. All parents receive the child protection policy.

The college's attractive prospectus and English website are supplemented by a range of information which parents receive in the form of a handbook. However, not all the information required by the regulations is provided. The following is omitted:

- the name and address of the proprietor
- the name of the Chair of the Governing Body
- details on the arrangements for the admission of students
- the number of staff at the college and a summary their qualifications
- the results of public examinations
- the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

All regulations are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that it has regard to all safeguarding arrangements in relation to the child protection policy, staff training, the checks made on students who are post-18 years and the guidance on allegations against staff as outlined by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- instigate effective measures to ensure students' health and safety with regard to the identification of all hazardous chemicals and by providing adequate facilities for students to use when washing their hands (paragraph 11)
- ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by ensuring that all the required checks are recorded and that fire drills are held during the school day as well as during the evening (paragraph 13)

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made.

- maintain the admission register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 by ensuring that the school can list all its admissions in alphabetical order (paragraph 17).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (standards in part 4) and must:

- ensure that generic questions about a person's medical fitness must only be requested after appointment (paragraph 19(2)(b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that there is adequate security of the building and grounds (paragraph 23(d))
- provide sufficient access so that emergency evacuations can be accomplished safely (paragraph 23(g))
- instigate an effective programme of maintenance and decoration (paragraph 23(p)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- provide the following information for parents and carers of students or prospective students at the school:
 - the name and address of the proprietor
 - the name of the Chair of the Governing Body (paragraph 24(1)(a))
- provide the following information for parents and carers of students or prospective students at the school:
 - details on the arrangements for the admission of students
 - the number of staff at the school and a summary their qualifications
 - the results of public examinations
 - the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the school should devise a three-year accessibility improvement plan.⁴

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils				✓
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Boarding school		
Date school opened	1995		
Age range of pupils	9 to 17 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 15	Girls: 5	Total: 20
Number of boarders	Boys: 15	Girls: 5	Total: 20
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (boarders)	£19,500		
Address of school	Maybush Lane Felixstowe IP11 7NA		
Telephone number	01394 282388		
Email address	Fic-uk@hotmail.com		
Headteacher	Robert Bloyce (Director of Studies)		
Proprietor	Jung Shil Lee		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

5 December 2011

Dear Students



Inspection of Felixstowe International College, Felixstowe, IP11 7NA

Dear Students

Thank you for the time you took to talk about your college and to explain how well you are helped to learn. You said very positive things about the staff, the college and about how well you all get on.

Your college provides an outstanding quality of education and you excel in your personal development. The teaching you receive is excellent. Staff assess your learning very well and they give you really good advice on what you need to do next.

For those of you who take examinations you do exceptionally well. For others, you learn very quickly and make excellent progress, particularly in English. You are very keen to learn, have excellent attitudes and behave exceptionally well. You live in a very harmonious college community.

I know some of you mentioned in your questionnaires that you feel more could be done to help you plan for the future. The school does have this arranged. Because you were late arriving into the country, this work has been delayed slightly. Other students last year certainly had a thorough programme. Some of you were also critical about resources. There are not enough in science and the college needs to increase these.

Finally, I have said that welfare, health and safety in the college are inadequate. The college now needs to ensure that you have a high quality of welfare as well as education. It needs to do this by ensuring it carries out all the checks on people, equipment and the building that it should.

Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

George Derby
Lead inspector

