

Bishopstrow College

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	865/6041
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135486
URN for social care	SC367610
Inspection number	386162
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen McShane HMI
Social care inspector	Wendy Anderson

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2011



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}

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and the government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Bishopstrow College is an English language college for boys and girls whose first language is not English, who hope to enter a boarding school in the United Kingdom. It is set in just over eight acres of grounds in the village of Bishopstrow near Warminster, Wiltshire. The college offers intensive English tuition from elementary to advanced level combined with teaching in other subjects. The college is fully accredited by the British Council for the provision of English courses. It operates a four term year and students attend between one and four terms. Students come from a range of countries and the vast majority have little or no English when admitted. None has a statement of special educational needs. The stated aims of the college are to 'enable students to fulfil their potential' and 'foster the shared values of respect for others and our environment'. The last inspection of education and boarding was in March 2009.

The college was opened in July 2006. It is registered for 40 boarders, aged eight to 17 years. All except one of the students are boarders. At the time of this integrated inspection, the college was in breach of its registration related to the number, age range and type of students. For example, there are 49 students on roll, two of whom are seven years old and one who is a day student. The college has also not sought the permission of the Department for Education to use additional boarding accommodation off site. The college acknowledged these issues and has applied to the Department of Education for a material change to amend its registration and to seek permission for the continued use of the boarding premises where the senior boys reside. The outcome of the application is not yet known.

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

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

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

⁴ www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Evaluation of the school

Bishopstrow College provides a good quality of education and meets its stated aims well. The good curriculum and effective teaching enable students to make good progress in English and acquire good skills and knowledge in a range of subjects. It is a harmonious and calm community where students grow in confidence and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The overall effectiveness of the boarding experience, including arrangements for welfare, health and safety, is inadequate. While there are significant strengths in provision, the college's safeguarding arrangements, particularly recruitment and staff vetting procedures, are not robust enough. Most education regulatory requirements are met, although a number of safeguarding regulations are not. A small number of national minimum standards associated with boarding provision are also unmet. The college has increased the numbers of students since its last inspection and maintained the quality of education it provides.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is well planned. Students have significant opportunities to develop skills related to English grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading and writing. Small group work is appropriately matched to students' English language levels and this means that work is carefully targeted and individual's linguistic skills are developed effectively. There is clear progression in schemes of work and they are suitably supported by published texts and resources. Other subjects such as English literature, mathematics, science, history and geography are taught in age-appropriate groups. Provision is well planned and successfully enables students to develop new knowledge and skills in a variety of different areas. Students develop insights into subjects from a British perspective and also acquire the subject specific and technical vocabulary of these subjects which prepares them very well for learning in their destination schools. Older students have the opportunity to gain International General Certificates of Secondary Education (IGCSEs). Additional one-to-one sessions are successful in further accelerating the progress of those who need specific tuition to meet the requirements of the examinations of their destination school or those students whom the college has identified as having difficulties learning. These sessions have clearly planned objectives and progress is regularly reviewed.

A very extensive and well-planned enrichment curriculum is a particular strength of the college. Daily sports activities successfully develop students' physical skills and enable them to gain an understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Boarding provision contributes effectively towards further developing students' personal development and understanding of English life and its language and United Kingdom institutions. For example, during the evenings there are a variety of

enjoyable activities including films, games and quizzes which further contribute to the students' practising and acquisition of English. Visits at the weekends, including opportunities to tour cities or places of interest, significantly develop the students' knowledge of England, its history and its culture. Students say that additional boarding activities are fun and that they enjoy them very much.

Teaching and assessment are good. In all lessons there is a very clear structure. The skills to be learned in the English language lessons are very precise and these are introduced and practised using a range of finely graded activities. In other subjects teachers display a strong subject knowledge and use a range of interesting stimuli and clear explanation to promote good learning. Lessons are very purposeful and move with an effective pace which means that students remain highly engaged.

Relationships between staff and students are very respectful. In the best lessons there is a strong integration between the subject matter and students practising their English. Teachers respond to students very effectively so that they can further shape their vocabulary, grammar or punctuation and staff offer opportunities to repeat things without interrupting the pace or interest of the lessons. The most effective learning is evident when students are able to use their new knowledge to talk about something that interests them. Here they become clearly animated and eager to take a risk to apply their new language and vocabulary. Learning is very occasionally slower if there is too much teacher talk and not enough opportunities for students to speak.

Regular assessments, documented effectively in individual learning plans, demonstrate that students make good progress. Effective use is made of assessment information to match work to students' capabilities so that education outcomes are good. The majority arrive at the college with little or no English. They soon become proficient speakers, readers and writers. It is very clear when speaking with them that they are proud of their progress. They develop strong confidence so that they are effective communicators in social situations and become successful learners in a college environment which is conducted solely in English. They learn to give interesting presentations with a good awareness of audience and effective structure, using particular linguistic conventions well. The quantity and quality of written work improve a great deal so students become effective in writing for different purposes such as note taking and writing reflective essays. Students are very successful in gaining external qualifications including those accredited by Cambridge University. Students who complete IGCSE courses are successful in a range of subjects, frequently gaining the higher grades in the examinations.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The vast majority of students arrive at Bishopstrow with no experience of living away from their family, of a different country or of boarding school. They enjoy their learning experience a great deal as demonstrated by their good attendance. They develop the skills necessary to learn and live in a boarding school environment and are very well prepared for future residential life elsewhere. Students are successful in

gaining places at the school of their choice. These schools and the agencies that place students on behalf of parents and carers are very clear that students from Bishopstrow are very successful in their future education as they transfer with confidence, resilience, good self-esteem, and good work habits. Behaviour is good in the college and in boarding and students have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. Provision is very effective at helping students to adjust to the different cultural expectations for behaviour at an English school. Students respond well to the stars and stripes system which rewards and reprimands. Students from a large number of different countries live and work very harmoniously together. Staff are very alert, during the day and in boarding, to encourage students not to remain in similar cultural or language groups in order that students mix together well. Older students take responsibilities through the prefect system and there is a strong expectation that students will care for each other that is realised. Through the curriculum, educational visits and opportunities to celebrate festival days, including different saints' days, harvest festival and the festival of light, students have the opportunity to learn about many different races and religions. Regular engagement with village life enriches the curriculum and develops students' knowledge of traditions, public institutions and services in England. Personal, social and health education and the daily morning meetings give good opportunities for students to reflect on issues of difference, bullying, relationships, and aspects related to living a healthy lifestyle.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is inadequate, in the college and in boarding, because recruitment, staff vetting and child protection procedures are not robust enough. The college's arrangements for checking the suitability of staff to work with students are inadequate. A child protection policy exists but it is not implemented effectively because safe recruitment practices are not adopted. Nevertheless, all staff have appropriate knowledge and training in how to fulfil their child protection responsibilities. The day-to-day care the students receive is good but it is undermined by safeguarding failures that put students' welfare at risk. Staff at the college are student focused and work hard at providing a warm, nurturing environment in which to live and work. Students speak very positively about all of the staff who care for them and would recommend the college to friends. The boarding is organised and run for the benefit of the boarders with an emphasis on developing a sense of community and promoting tolerance. There are strong links and good relations between the boarding and teaching staff. Students receive individualised care in line with their needs and abilities. However, the school does not record the support systems it has put in place for boarders' welfare consistently. Transition to the college is well managed with good information for the students and particular activities are organised to bring groups together. Students are able to maintain good contact with home, friends and family through email, mobile phones, a private college telephone and internet communication. The provision of food, snack and drinks at the college is outstanding. The menu is varied, nutritious and well balanced. The chef has up-to-date information on individuals' dietary requirements

and is responsive to students' likes and dislikes so that he can adapt the menus accordingly. Although the school carries out a daily roll call and ensures adequate supervision of students it does not keep an attendance register for the one day student on roll as required. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The college has not undertaken all of the required recruitment and staff vetting checks to ensure that all staff and others are suitable to work with students. A selection of staff records was scrutinised and these did not confirm that all of the required checks have been carried out. For example, ensuring that all staff have a valid Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and List 99 checks are carried out prior to appointment. Checks that the college has made are recorded in a single central register but because of the gaps in staff files, the central register is not comprehensive and information contained within it cannot be verified.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The college has appropriate classrooms so that the curriculum can be delivered effectively. Appropriate adaptations to the science curriculum are made as there are no specialist facilities. The attractive grounds offer good opportunities for sports and leisure and these are supplemented by sessions at the local sports centre. All boarders are happy with their boarding accommodation which is good overall. The main house is comfortable and appropriately furnished. Bedrooms are divided by gender and then again by age. There is ample social space for the students to access. These include a library, which has newspapers and magazines. There is a spacious activity room which has a piano, drums, exercise machine, pool table and a large screen for showing films, plus plenty of seating. The information technology room has a number of personal computers plus additional connections for students' own laptops. The common room has an area for the students to prepare drinks with a comfortable seating area. Accommodation at the additional boarding provision is very good although this is not yet registered.

Provision of information

The college is currently updating its website but all of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents and others. Individual learning plans, which are prepared regularly, give parents and carers good information on the attainment and progress that students are making. The college keeps very close contact with the agents from different countries so that ongoing decisions can be made about destination schools and students' welfare.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The college has a written complaints procedure that meets requirements.

Leadership and management of boarding

Leadership and management and the quality of care and safety are inadequate because recruitment, staff vetting and child protection procedures are not robust enough.

There is clear leadership and management of boarding and outcomes are good. For example, there are harmonious and good relations among students and boarding staff. Boarders enjoy residential life and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The senior boarding person is the principal who is very experienced and always on duty. The rest of the boarding team is made up of graduate interns. The principal has provided staff with appropriate training on child protection, health and safety. A number of staff have completed a first-aid qualification. More training is scheduled for the coming months. Boarding is a key component of the college and all staff are student focused. The staff provide boarders with a supportive, nurturing environment in which to live. Staff supervision of the boarders is appropriate throughout the 24 hour day.

Boarders said staff seek their views on the day-to-day running of the college and especially when their individual plans are developed. For example, inspection evidence shows that students were involved in goal setting when plans were first established. The college also carries out questionnaires once a term to seek the views of the boarders on all aspects of college life. This information is discussed with staff but the results of consultation are not formally collated as required. The college's current statement of boarding principles does not reflect current practice. The college is currently admitting seven year olds, has an additional boarding house and is taking day students in breach of its registration. The guide for boarders contains all of the required information but this is all in English. Some students arrive without any English. Boarders said this guide was helpful but only after they had improved their English skills.

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.⁵

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

⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/uklj/2010/1997/contents/made.

- ensure that the arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the college are effective and have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- ensure that the arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders have due regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools (paragraph 8)
- maintain an attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006⁶ (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 it can be verified that that no member of staff:
 - is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list)
- or
 - carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the college in contravention of any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction (A List 99 check) (paragraph 19(2)(a)).
- ensure, for all appointments from 1 September 2003, that appropriate checks been carried out and completed to confirm each member of staff's:
 - identity
 - medical fitness
 - where appropriate, qualifications
 - and, for appointments made from 1 May 2007, the additional check of their right to work in the UK (paragraph 19(2)(b)).
- ensure that for all appointments since 1 September 2003, an enhanced criminal bureau (CRB) check is made by the proprietor in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the college and the enhanced CRB certificate which is the subject of the application is obtained before or as soon as is practicable after the person's appointment (paragraph 19(2)(c))
- ensure, for all appointments from 1 September 2003, in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of children for whom accommodation is provided, in addition to the requirements of paragraphs 19(2)(a to d), that a check been made by the proprietor that Standard 38 of the national minimum standards for boarding schools is complied with (paragraph 19(2)(e))
- ensure that the checks in 19(2)(b) were completed before a person's appointment, apart from where exemptions apply (paragraph 19(3))
- ensure that for each member of staff appointed on or after 1 May 2007, the single central register shows that the following checks were made, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained:
 - of the person's identity

⁶ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2006/1751/contents/made.

- that the person is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list), or there is no direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification prohibition or restriction having the same effect
- of relevant qualifications, if appropriate
- of whether an enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) certificate was obtained
- in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, the further checks made which have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- of their right to work in the United Kingdom
- in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of children for whom accommodation is provided, a check was made to ensure compliance with Standard 38 of the national minimum standard for boarding schools (paragraph 22(3)).

National minimum standards

In order to meet the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated regulations, the school should:

- ensure a safe recruitment procedure and that vetting of staff takes place in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to the relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State (national minimum standards 14.1 and 13.3)
- ensure the statement of boarding principles is amended to reflect current practice (national minimum standard 1)
- ensure that effective child protection arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (national minimum standard 11)
- ensure that the support provided for specific students is collated into a welfare plan (national minimum standard 2.1)
- ensure that the results of consultation with boarders are effectively collated (national minimum standard 17).

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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				✓
--	--	--	--	---

Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience

Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience				✓
Outcomes for boarders		✓		
Quality of boarding provision and care				✓
Boarders' safety				✓
Leadership and management of boarding				✓

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Language college		
Date school opened	2006		
Age range of pupils	8–17 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 30	Girls: 19	Total: 49
Number of boarders	Boys: 29	Girls: 19	Total: 48
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
Termly fees (boarders)	£ 8,950 per term		
Address of school	Bishopstrow Road, Bishopstrow Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 9HU		
Telephone number	01985 219210		
Email address	franh@bishopstrow.com		
Headteacher	Frances Henson		
Proprietor	Frances Henson		

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.

20 November 2011

Dear Students



Inspection of Bishopstrow College, Bishopstrow BA12 9HU

Thank you so much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your college recently. We were very impressed by the way you spoke to us and explained to us in English about life at Bishopstrow.

We judged that the quality of education is good. This is because you make good progress in English and other subjects and you are very well prepared for your next school and life as a boarder in England. Teaching is good and there is a wide range of activities through the day, evening and weekend to help you learn successfully and enjoy college.

We were impressed by the harmonious community at Bishopstrow, and the way in which you play and work together well. Mr and Mrs Henson and all the staff are clearly committed to care for you on a day-to-day basis and you told us that you felt secure and would recommend the college to your friends. You also told us about the excellent food that is prepared for you. We found that the provision made for your welfare, health and safety is inadequate because the college's procedures for recruiting and vetting staff are unsatisfactory. The college will be asked to improve its safeguarding procedures and statement of purpose and ensure that the results of consultations with you are effectively collated and any support you receive is made into an appropriate welfare plan.

We would like to wish you every success in the future and trust you will continue to work hard and look after each other so that Bishopstrow College continues to do well.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McShane
Her Majesty's Inspector