

Felixstowe International College

Welfare inspection report for a boarding school

DfE registration number	935/6076
Unique reference number for social care	SC024579
Unique reference number for education	124899
Inspection dates	25/01/2012 to 27/01/2012
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection 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 government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{1,2}

Information about the school

Felixstowe International College is an independent boarding school which accommodates up to 32 students, aged nine to 18 years. Students are from overseas, exclusively far-eastern countries, and principally Korea. Many are sons and daughters of missionaries based in Tanzania. Students attend the college for a minimum of a month and up to 12 months and occasionally longer. At the time of the inspection the college had 23 students. All students are boarders and are learning English as an additional language. The pupils attend to learn English and for some, to prepare them to continue their education at British schools. The current provision is used for boarding accommodation for boys and girls, academic study, dining and for social purposes. The boarding provision was last inspected on 9 May 2008.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	inadequate
Outcomes for boarders	good
Quality of boarding provision and care	good
Boarders' safety	inadequate
Leadership and management of boarding	satisfactory

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the boarding inspection are as follows.

- The overall effectiveness of Felixstowe International College is inadequate. This is due to significant shortfalls identified in safeguarding which compromise the safety of boarders.
- The provision of care is good. This is supported by the nurturing care students receive from housemothers. This provides an environment in which boarders' emotional, physical and social needs are acknowledged and promoted.
- The effective relationships between boarders and staff and between boarders and their peers result in the promotion of boarders' self-esteem and well-being. The commitment of staff who work in the boarding environment mean that boarders are well cared for. This is helped by the communication links between staff and parents.
- The boarding provision is a welcoming, adequately maintained and nurturing environment in which boarders are able to extend their skills and promote their independence.
- The school caters well for boarders' health. A nutritious and varied diet and an emphasis on keeping active promotes boarders' health and well-being
- Behaviour is managed to good effect. Those systems in place to promote good behaviour help boarders to progress and prepare them well for moving on from the school.
- While the current staffing arrangements are clear and ensure continuity of care for boarders, the leadership of boarding and lines of accountability are less clear on occasions. This results in decisions being taken at times which are detrimental

to the outcomes of boarders.

- The school actively promotes equality, tackles discrimination and endorses inclusion through the practice delivered to boarders in the boarding house.

Outcomes for boarders

Boarder's outcomes are good. Boarders enjoy constructive relationships with staff and each other. This enables boarders to form purposeful and secure relationships with adults and their peers. A sense of boarders' tolerance of each other and a mutual respect of differences is evident in the boarding environment.

The appropriate delegation of responsibilities and duties mean that boarders' personal development, including their self esteem, independence and confidence, is promoted. Boarders feel valued and respected because staff consult with them about their likes and dislikes, about activities outside of the school day, and encourage them through boarders council and other consultative systems to have a say in how boarding is run.

Behaviour is well managed and students show good manners at mealtimes. This helps to stimulate boarders to progress their emotional and social development. Recent initiatives to establish a model of individualised care which include establishing welfare plans and the emphasis on celebrating achievement and good behaviour help boarders to develop a healthy sense of self-worth.

Boarders are generally happy and enjoy the boarding experience. They view the management of behaviour as being fair and are positive about how the boarding experience has helped them to better prepare them for their futures. Boarders value the good levels of support available from staff. The emphasis on improvements made to healthcare further enhances the quality of care afforded to boarders.

Quality of boarding provision and care

The quality of the residential provision and care is good. A handbook for boarders and a 'buddy' system whereby a new student is matched to an existing student of a similar age, help students settle into boarding.

The experience of boarding enables students to form secure and stable relationships with the housemothers. A positive sense of boarders encouraging and supporting one another was evident in the boarding environment.

The school has made significant improvements to the arrangements in place to promote and care for pupils' health. This includes updated medication policies and procedures implemented in practice, the introduction of welfare plans, improvements made to the systems for the receipt, storage and administration of medicines,

initiating pain charts to more effectively monitor how pupils are feeling when unwell and introducing systems in which to regularly audit medicines to ensure safe practice. Medication information and consents are obtained prior to admission to ensure the college is fully aware of boarders' current health needs. Boarders confirm that they are well cared for when unwell and there are appropriate systems in place for boarders to seek support at all times during the day and night. This helps boarders to settle and gives them a sense of well-being.

The provision of good quality catering and the encouragement given to students to keep active promotes boarders' physical, emotional and psychological health. The college caters appropriately for boarders' religious and cultural needs, and for individual preferences. Mealtimes provide a pleasant social, relaxed opportunity for boarders to mix with one another. Well established guidelines to promote good table manners mean that boarders understand the behaviour expected of them at mealtimes and as a result demonstrate impeccable table manners. Boarders talked positively about the food provided and of the facilities available to them to make snacks and drinks.

Boarders are happy with the range of activities available to them outside of the school day. However, the outside area has limited resources and uneven surfacing. Boarders are supported to maintain contact with their family through access to telephone and email facilities. In addition, staff maintain effective communication with parents and guardians to promote the well-being of students.

Boarders confirm that staff are accessible to them and that they are actively encouraged to 'have a say' in how boarding is run. A 'grumbles' folder for students to express any worry or concern, 'how was my week?' forms which are distributed weekly and regular boarder council meetings provide ample opportunity for boarders to express their views and wishes.

The residential accommodation is clean and satisfactorily maintained. While there are adequate numbers of bathroom and toilet facilities available to boarders, individual means of hand drying are not available, which may compromise hygiene. There are adequate common room facilities; bedrooms have been personalised to promote a homely atmosphere.

Boarders' safety

The safety of boarders is inadequate. While boarders report that they feel safe, the school's systems do not fully protect boarders. For example, while there is a process to undertake checks and references on staff, not all persons over 16 (not on the roll of the school) who live on the same premises as boarders have undergone a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. In addition, certificates of good conduct and other checks are not always obtained for adults moving into boarding accommodation from abroad who have unsupervised contact with boarders.

Written agreements are not in place between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as boarders. In addition, boarders have been placed in temporary lodging arrangements without the school fully assessing the suitability of such an arrangement. For example, in one instance a CRB and other checks have not been obtained and the care has not been monitored. As a result of these shortfalls the welfare and safety of boarders is not adequately safeguarded by the school.

While the college's safeguarding policy has been updated to include the Deputy Principal as the school's 'lead' for child protection, there are still a few staff who have not completed basic safeguarding training. Staff designated to 'lead' in child protection in the Deputy's absence demonstrate a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities commensurate to the role; through their own initiative they have undertaken level 2 training in child protection.

Fire drills are now recorded and an annual fire risk assessment has been compiled by the school and sent to the Fire Authority for their approval. An integrated fire alarm system and updated emergency lighting is currently in the process of being installed as a result of action being taken by the Fire Authority for the school's non-compliance with a previously identified action.

Anti-bullying policy and guidance includes information on cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying. There is a culture of good behaviour and clear maintenance of boundaries. Staff actively promote positive behaviour through a system of merit and de-merits and through the 'bad choice' record which allows a young person to reflect on their behaviour. Instances of bullying are not tolerated and staff respond promptly to any occurrence. The general behaviour of students is very good and as a result, a respectful and safe culture is evident throughout the school.

Leadership and management of boarding

The management and organisation of the boarding provision is satisfactory. The school actively upholds equality and is prompt in dealing with any instances of discrimination. The behaviour of boarders symbolises the school's approach to respect, community cohesion and equality of opportunity.

While required records are kept and adequately maintained, some are not updated and streamlined to more accurately reflect the practice in place.

There are satisfactory partnerships between the school and parents. This helps to make sure students settle into boarding and that the interests of individual boarders are promoted. Staffing arrangements throughout the boarding accommodation ensure that boarders are adequately supervised and supported. Relationships between staff and boarders is both professional and positive.

There have been some positive changes since the last welfare inspection. The full-

time housemother has been influential in bringing about improvements made in relation to pastoral care systems and practice. This includes introducing boarder forums and forms to monitor how boarders are feeling; also, through improving the quality of healthcare systems and records in place so as to better promote the health and well-being of boarders. Despite this good work, it is evident that decisions have been taken either without consultation with the full-time housemother and in the case of introducing adults to the boarding environment, contrary to the advice of the housemother. Furthermore, the governors have no input in terms of the governing body's role in monitoring the quality of care that boarders receive. This results in a lack of clarity as to who is responsible for the overview of boarding.

While there is good communication between staff working with boarders outside of the school day and outcomes for boarders is good, there is no established training programme to ensure staff continue to hold the skills and knowledge necessary to meet individual needs.

All recommendations from the previous inspection with the exception of those relating to fire safety have been successfully addressed. Recommendations relating to the fire risk assessment and the implementation of actions so as to comply with the local fire service recommendations are in the process of being implemented. It is anticipated that this will be completed within the next three weeks.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools.

- The health, safety and welfare of the occupants are reasonably assured in every part of the school's land and buildings. (NMS 6.1)
- The school has regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State, 'Health and Safety: Department for Education Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies' (as referenced in 'Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 6.2)
- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as referenced in 'Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards') and any requirements set out in regulations relating to school premises. (NMS 7.1)
- The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 11)
- Schools operate safe recruitment procedures and vet staff in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance (as referenced in 'Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards') issued by the Secretary of State.

(NMS 14.1)

- For all persons over 16 (not on the roll of the school) who after April 2002 began to live on the same premises as boarders but are not employed by the school, there is a Criminal Records Bureau check completed at the standard level. (NMS 14.2)
- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as boarders (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with boarders, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with children. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence. (NMS 14.3)
- Any guardians (as referenced in 'Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards') appointed by the school are subject to the same recruitment checks as staff, and their care of pupils is monitored. (NMS 14.6)
- Senior boarding staff have an adequate level of experience and/or training. (NMS 13.2)
- Any lodgings arranged by the school to accommodate pupils provide satisfactory accommodation and supervision, are checked before use, and are monitored by the school during use including checks at least yearly (as referenced in 'Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 20.1)
- The school visits all potential lodgings, and interviews the adult who will be responsible for the accommodation of the pupils in each lodging, takes up references, and has recorded a satisfactory assessment, before any pupil is placed there. The school can demonstrate that members of the host family aged over 16 are checked through Criminal Records Bureau, with a satisfactory outcome known before any pupil is placed. (NMS 20.4)
- The school has a satisfactory written agreement with each adult providing lodgings for pupils on its behalf. (NMS 20.5)
- The school provides satisfactory written guidance to host families accommodating pupils on behalf of the school, covering the school's policy and practice for lodging pupils. (NMS 20.6)
- At least once per school term a member of staff discusses their lodgings separately with each pupil accommodated by or on behalf of the school in lodgings, recording the pupil's assessment in writing and taking action on any concerns or complaints. (NMS 20.7)

What should the school do to improve further?

- review all policies to ensure that they remain current and accurately reflect the practice in place.
- consider a more hygienic means of hand drying in washrooms.

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.



25/01/2012

Dear Boarders

Inspection of Felixstowe International College

As you will know, Ofsted recently inspected the boarding provision in your school. I visited your boarding house and spoke to many of you and the staff who look after you during the boarding time. It was very nice to meet you and I really enjoyed my time at the school. Thank you for making me feel so welcome and for taking the time to talk to me about your experience as a boarder at the school.

I think that the support and help you receive from housemothers is good and helps you to prepare for the future. You get on well together and I particularly liked the nice atmosphere in your common room and dining room. I think that the boarding accommodation is good, and I liked the way many of you had personalised your bedrooms to make them homely.

I did however find some concerns about safety. The college now needs to take steps to put things right to ensure that your safety is fully protected. It needs to do this by ensuring that it carries out checks on all adults who work with you and on anyone who looks after you outside of the school. It also needs to make sure it completes the work on improving the fire safety arrangements in the school.

It was a real pleasure meeting you and visiting your school. I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Hunt