

Hockerill Anglo European College

Welfare inspection report for a boarding school

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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

Hockerill Anglo-European College is an Academy, situated within easy access of Bishop's Stortford town centre. It offers education to 812 pupils aged from 11 to 17 years, including 341 boarding students. Students come from many nationalities and there are 35 mother tongues spoken in the college. Boarding students are accommodated in five boarding houses, which are located within the college grounds. All boarding houses provide self-contained facilities that include showers, bathrooms, toilets, common rooms, games rooms and kitchen facilities.

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

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

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the boarding inspection are as follows.

- The overall effectiveness of the boarding provision is outstanding. There are many strengths in the care provided and staff have very high expectations for students, which have a positive impact on their progress and outcomes.
- The boarding houses are extremely well-organised and managed. The ethos of the boarding provision is based on openness, trust and respect that celebrates individuality and achievement. Students are seen as unique. Their individual needs are recognised and very well managed.
- There is a clear ethos of mutual respect between students and staff which permeates throughout the routines and practice delivered. Students are enormously proud of their school. They know that their views are taken seriously and they have a strong sense of belonging.
- There is a continual focus on developing the services and facilities available. Practice development encompasses students' views and focuses on their best interests at all times.
- Robust safeguarding procedures and systems actively promote students' safety and welfare. Boarding students feel exceptionally safe and secure and have adults to whom they can turn to for support at any time.
- Effective communication between staff groups and excellent health care facilities ensure students' emotional and physical health needs are recognised and met. Parents are consistently positive about the boarding experience and the effectiveness of staff communication.
- Students from this country and around the world enjoy their boarding at the

school. Exceptionally good boarding experiences promote students' personal, cultural and social development.

- All the national minimum standards have been met or exceeded.

Outcomes for boarders

The outcomes for boarding students are outstanding. Routines and practices in the boarding provision support the students' educational achievement and social development. Students make exceptional progress during their time at the college. Time is scheduled for homework and staff are always available to assist in the evenings and at weekends. Students respond to staff's high expectations of their abilities, helping them to achieve their full potential. Students know that staff want them to do well in life and are there to help them achieve their individual goals.

Students report that staff are 'always there for you' and they are 'great'. Students feel part of a large supportive family and are proud of their college and in particular, their boarding house. Staff are, in turn, proud of the students and there is a clear feeling of mutual respect and trust between staff and students. Students contribute to community events both in their local community and abroad. They undertake local charity work, put on talent shows locally and go abroad to help communities in other countries such as Rwanda and India.

An extensive range sport and leisure activities ensures that students' individual interests are met. Students are able to take part in group activities and pursue their individual interests within the college or in the community.

Students report: 'I like the boarding house because we can do a lot with friends, for example, play games. I also like the choices we have.' They also said: 'What I really like about boarding is the atmosphere; everybody is really friendly and welcoming. I never feel left out or segregated. It is like a big family and we always solve problems together; we are all in the same boat.'

The students' views are routinely sought and highly valued. Their views are central to practice developments within the boarding provision and the wider college. Boarding staff continually strive to ensure that boarding students are treated equally. An open weekend is organised to enable family members who live abroad or some distance from the college to visit and see their children. This inclusive approach permeates through all areas of practice.

Parents stress that the help provided by staff and highly effective communication systems mean they are confident that their child is very well looked after.

Quality of boarding provision and care

The quality of the boarding provision is outstanding. Teachers and boarding staff place the well-being of students at the centre of their practice. Highly effective communication between health care professionals, boarding and teaching staff ensures the needs of students are identified and action taken to help the student. The views of parents are sought and when required, highly individualised welfare plans are put in place.

Staff across the college ensure the induction of new boarders is effective and supportive. They also ensure that students are supported and prepared for leaving and moving on.

Students say that on arrival they are made welcome, given the information and support they need from staff. They stated: 'The induction process is great; I appreciate both the formal support from staff as well as the informal support for other students'. Students who will be leaving the college soon, say: 'The support I have had has been excellent. It has helped me decide what I want to do and plan for the future.'

Students gain confidence and independence, because there are excellent opportunities for them to further develop their personal and social skills. Students report that being a boarder provides: 'the perfect environment for both work and socialising'. They like the opportunities available to develop their leadership skills and report that they have made life-long friends at the college. Students consider that being a boarder at the college helps them in preparation for the move to university and their experiences enhance their future employment opportunities.

Boarding houses offer a comfortable, clean environment. Furnishings are to a high standard and each boarding house has its own character. There is ample space.

Behaviour is exceptionally good, with staff and students respecting each other. Students are aware of the adult who is responsible for them at any one time and how to contact them during the day or night. There are clear booking in and out procedures, to which students adhere.

Students can and most do have regular contact with family and friends. Parents report that excellent arrangements are in place for them to talk to their child when visiting. They are made to feel very welcome. Students state that they enjoy the opportunities provided to have friends and family visit for special dining nights or for weekend visits. They appreciate the efforts of the catering and other staff to make these very special times for them.

Students have specific weekend programmes offering them the opportunity to have regularly planned outings or events. These include trips to various London attractions, fun parks, beach parties, go-karting and golf as well as a wide variety of

on-site activities such as barbeques and discos. There are also weekend events to welcome those new to boarding and for those due to leave and graduating.

Consultation with students is excellent and an integral part of everyday practice. This ensures that any issues students have, or points they would like staff to consider, are addressed informally. For example, students asked staff to look into internet speed. The management team are reviewing the internet service and have taken interim measures to improve this. Students are happy with this solution. Students also raised an issue regarding meals. They say this has been addressed and consider that the arrangements now in place for meals are excellent, with a wide range of good quality food available for every meal.

The college has an exceptionally well-run health service which meets all students' health care needs. Healthy eating and exercise is encouraged; special diets are catered for and students can opt to have fruit up to four times a day. Different leisure activities are provided to ensure students with varying physical abilities are able to take part in sports they enjoy, which also challenge them appropriately.

Boarders' safety

The safety of students is outstanding. The school gives a high priority to safety; the physical environment of the boarding provision is safe and secure. All staff have first aid training and additional support is provided from the health centre. Risk assessment and management of risk is effective. Health and safety is very well managed and students and staff are clear about evacuation procedures. All activities and environmental features are routinely and robustly assessed. Boarding students have excellent opportunities to try new and challenging activities in a safe and structured way.

Child protection awareness is given a high priority within the college. There are senior designated staff responsible for child protection and delivering training to all the staff. Staff are vigilant and resourceful in meeting individual needs. Students report there is no bullying; they feel safe, secure and well cared for by 'great' staff. They spoke of feeling valued and respected and are confident that staff would notice any signs that a student was unhappy, or that this would be reported to staff by other students. Students clearly see it as the role of everyone at the college to look after each other and take action to ensure that they are all safe and happy.

Particular named staff are reported as being the 'best ever', the 'best head of house'. Students say that they have adults they can talk to if they have any concerns. Information on how to access an adult independent of the school is clearly displayed and students say that this person 'is approachable and listens'.

Behaviour of students is excellent and reflects the high standards expected by the staff.

Leadership and management of boarding

The management and organisation of the boarding provision is outstanding. Parents and students have easy access to information about the college and receive detailed information relating to individual boarding houses. Parents value the staff's availability to discuss any issues. They praise the arrangements made to ensure they are able to visit the college and see what life as a boarder is like.

Equality of opportunity for boarders is central to practice developments. Great care is taken to ensure that parents who live abroad are kept up to date with events and a dedicated open weekend is organised to enable them to visit. This ensures all students have the opportunity for their parents to visit over a weekend, have fun and relax in a warm, friendly atmosphere.

The boarding provision is staffed with experienced boarding and teaching staff, all of whom value the students, each other and the leadership of the management team. There is a strong and purposeful drive to place the views, social and educational needs of students at the centre of the service. Routines and procedures are clear, well established and operate consistently to provide a safe, sensitive and motivating environment for students. There is a consistent focus on achievement and praise and a very strong emphasis on building and maintaining meaningful and respectful relationships between staff, students and their families.

There is a strong ethos for continued improvement of the boarding service and most significantly for the outcomes for the students. The director of boarding regularly monitors boarding practice and three of the college governors have specific responsibility to oversee the boarding service. Boarding is an integral part of the services provided by the college. The development plan for the boarding provision is clear, practical and embedded into the college's overall improvement plan.

All required policies, documents and records are in place and support effective staff practice and excellent management of the service. These documents are reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the ongoing development of the boarding provision.

Since the last inspection, boarding houses and the health care centre have been upgraded and facilities within existing houses significantly improved. The management team continually strive to improve the service and have plans in place to further develop the boarding in terms of numbers, boarding houses and quality of provision.

National minimum standards

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

What should the school do to improve further?

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.



20/04/2012

Dear students

Inspection of Hockerill Anglo European College

As you will know we recently visited your school to carry out an inspection. I would like to thank you for your assistance and hospitality during the inspection. We spent time in the boarding houses talking to boarders and spoke with staff who look after you. A lot of you also filled in our questionnaire, as did your parents and this was extremely helpful. We considered your views about boarding when coming to the conclusion that the school offers an outstanding boarding service.

We found there is clearly a great deal of mutual respect and trust between boarding students and staff. The management of the boarding service is excellent and provides an environment in which you thrive and develop as individuals. There is a wide range of activities for you to enjoy after school, both during the week and at weekends. We were very impressed by the support you receive in the boarding houses. The way you behave and look after one another is excellent.

The residential houses are clean and homely. There is a very friendly atmosphere where you can have fun, relax and make friends. The residential staff look after you exceptionally well and you have people to talk with if you have any concerns. You say the food has improved recently and the food provided was considered to be to a high standard. The health care service is outstanding. Robust health and safety arrangements are in place to keep you safe. The staff are very proud of you and you are all proud to be part of the boarding community at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Gwen Buckley / Stephen Halliley