

Abbey College

Wells Road, Malvern, WR14 4JF

Inspection dates

31 May 2013

Context of the inspection

This announced education and boarding integrated monitoring inspection was made at the request of the Department for Education. The purpose of this visit was to check the progress made by the college in addressing the failings identified in the education and boarding integrated inspection which was carried out with no prior notice in November 2012. The college's action plan, which set out its proposals for addressing these shortcomings, was evaluated by Ofsted in March 2013 and found to require improvement.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

Good progress

At the time of the last inspection, the college's arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of students were inadequate. The leadership and management of boarding were also inadequate. Senior leaders had not satisfactorily implemented procedures which properly reflected the national guidance on how to safeguard students. Not all the required checks on suitability of staff to work with children had been completed before they started to work unsupervised on the college premises. Day-to-day attention to health and safety matters was not robust enough and risk assessments were not managed in a sufficiently coordinated way. Information about how the college was meeting the risks it had identified was not thorough enough, particularly with regard to security, barring entry to unsuitable buildings, monitoring younger students who leave the premises after school, and checking the access of visitors through the main entrance. Neither the child protection policy nor the procedures set out in the associated training were implemented correctly; staff demonstrated a lack of clarity about how to manage the procedures. The single central register, which shows which checks had been made on staff, had some administrative errors and did not include all the adults that it should have done. Some of the bathrooms in the boarding houses were in a sub-standard condition.

The college's action plan to rectify these shortcomings was judged to require improvement as it did not include sufficient information about its proposals to address two of the national minimum standards relating to risk assessments and access to boarding accommodation.

This inspection found that the college has had due regard for national guidance in reviewing and revising its arrangements for safeguarding students. In particular, the college's recruitment procedures, together with the way in which the required checks on the suitability of adults having contact with students are made and recorded, have been overhauled. The leaders and managers involved in appointing staff and administering the college's single central register of the checks undertaken have attended appropriate training. Furthermore, arrangements have been made with the college's sister organisation, Abbey College in London, for systems to be regularly monitored and

evaluated externally. This inspection found that the single central record was complete and accurately matched the sample of personnel records examined. The college has ensured that all its own staff, those employed by its contractors, and others who may have contact with students are fully checked and that their details are clearly recorded. It has also taken suitable action, through briefings and new induction procedures, to ensure that staff and students are fully aware of safeguarding procedures and the steps to be taken should there be a concern.

Significant improvements have been made in the implementation of the college's health and safety arrangements. Leaders and managers have worked with external consultants in establishing a systematic approach to undertaking and responding to risk assessments. Roles and responsibilities are now clearly defined and understood by staff. The college has responded well to particular concerns expressed in the last inspection report about the security of the premises; the measures taken are effective and there has been a coherent approach to raising staff and student awareness of the new arrangements. Door access codes are regularly changed and sanctions are meticulously applied to students who do not follow procedures for signing out when visiting local amenities. In addition, the college has made suitable arrangements for monitoring visitors to the site and regulating their access to the premises. The college has also taken appropriate action to further restrict access to areas or buildings in the grounds that are not in regular use or are awaiting refurbishment. Refurbishment of the sub-standard bathroom accommodation has also been completed and students report their satisfaction with the facilities.

The college's leaders and managers have established effective systems to monitor the implementation of policies and procedures, and to respond promptly to any shortcomings that arise. External consultants are undertaking annual reviews of the college's policies and procedures, as well as providing support and guidance, in order to support the college's leadership and management.

Changes to the independent school regulations have been made since the college was last inspected, in regard to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and to the requirements for the premises and accommodation. Compliance with the latest regulations was checked during this inspection visit and the college meets all of these new requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements

Inspection team

Michael Best, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Robin Whistlecraft

Social Care Inspector

Information about this school

- Abbey College provides full-time education for 77 male and female students from all around the world. It was established in 1979. Nearly all students board on the main college site. A small number of students live nearby with host families. The college runs a number of Easter and summer vacation courses.
- For all students, English is not their first language. There are no students with a statement of special educational needs. It aims to: 'foster a community of international understanding and shared values in which overseas students receive the quality of academic education and support in English Language which will enable them to succeed...' and 'progress successfully to higher education...'

School details

Unique reference number	117035
Social care unique reference number	SC043035
Inspection number	423322
DfE registration number	885/6026
<p>This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	77
Proprietor	Hekmat Kaveh
Headteacher	Philip Moere (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 November 2012
Annual fees (boarders)	£21,950–£24,950
Telephone number	01684 892300
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Email address	enquiries@abbeycollege.co.uk

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