

Bishopstrow College

Bishopstrow Road, Bishopstrow, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 9HU

Inspection dates 8–10 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

This school is inadequate because

- The proprietors have not ensured that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- The school does not meet four of the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching is good. This is supported by a good curriculum, which meets the needs of all students well.
- Students achieve well in their lessons and make good progress, especially in their written and spoken English.
- Students' behaviour is good. They are courteous and polite and show care and compassion for each other.
- Students are successful in gaining entry into the school chosen by their parents or carers.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards)(England) (Amendments) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the report.
- The school does not meet the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was undertaken with half a day's notice. Ten lessons were observed, most with the Director of Studies.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, staff and students.
- No responses to the Parent View online questionnaire were available. Eight teaching staff and four boarding staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Written evidence, including work in students' books, schemes of work and data on students' progress was examined. The inspector heard students read.

Inspection team

Jill Bainton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Reed

Social Care Inspector

Tracey Metcalfe

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bishopstrow College is an English language college for boys and girls whose first language is not English, who plan to enter a boarding school in the United Kingdom. It is set in 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 college opened in 2006 and is registered for 65 boarders and five day students aged seven to 17 years. There are no day students currently. There are 51 students on roll aged eight to 17 years.
- The school had its last full Ofsted inspection combined with a social care inspection in November 2011. Since then it has had a progress monitoring visit in May 2012 to check the implementation of its action plan, and a material change visit was made in 2012 to approve changes to the number of boarders and the age range at the school. An emergency visit by Ofsted Social Care was made in February 2013 in response to a complaint. The concerns were investigated and found to be without foundation.
- The college aims to 'enable students to fulfil their potential and foster the shared values of respect for others and the environment'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management so that there are clear processes in place to ensure:
 - a more rigorous approach to school improvement planning and review that focuses on improving the quality of teaching, including improving staff training
 - that the performance management of staff and lesson observations are systematically planned, carried out and reviewed
 - that the timetabling of lessons is reviewed to give more variety of subjects across each day and ensure that sufficient time is allocated for practical activities in lessons
 - that the national minimum standards for boarding are rigorously implemented.

The school must meet the following independent school standards.

- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. (Paragraph 7)
- Ensure that arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders and have regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools. (Paragraph 8)
- Ensure that an updated safeguarding children policy (as required under part 3, paragraph 7) is published on the school's website. (Paragraph 24(1)(c))

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

- Ensure that there is an appropriate range and choice of activities for boarders outside teaching time, including sufficient and suitably timed free time each day. (NMS 10.1)
- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 11)

- Ensure that senior boarding staff have an adequate level of experience and/or training. (NMS 13.2)
- Ensure that the staff supervising boarders outside of teaching time are sufficient in number, training and experience for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved. (NMS 15.3)

Points for further improvement

- Consider the translation of key documents to ensure students fully understand key information; in particular, dealing with bullying and access to external support and help. (NMS 11)
- Review the suitability of the school's restraint policy and following review, provide physical intervention training to staff if this is required. (NMS 12)
- Continue to develop consultation and participation to gain students' views to inform improvements in boarding practice. (NMS 17)
- Improve communication and recording across the school to ensure that records clearly show that appropriate actions have been taken to respond to and meet the arising needs of students. (NMS 13)
- Use the findings from monitoring processes and the collations of students' views to fully implement the school's development plan ensuring that the needs and views of students are central in all aspects of boarding practice. (NMS 13)
- Provide personal development plans for all staff to ensure that key training is undertaken and staff benefit from continuous professional development in boarding practice. (NMS 15)

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' achievement over time is good. This is as a result of good teaching over the period that the students are at the school. Students are carefully assessed on entry using standardised testing for their English speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. This information is then used well as a diagnostic tool for teaching and students are placed in appropriate groups with fellow students at comparable levels. Some stay for an average of two terms, with others only attending for an 11 week term. Students are well prepared to move on to an English boarding school. Their English language skills, both spoken and written, rapidly reach an acceptable standard to enable them to more easily integrate into their chosen school. Students make good progress in improving their communication, literacy and language skills. All lessons are in English, so students are fully immersed in the spoken language from the time of their arrival, when they agree to use English at all times. For example, in a primary English lesson, students who had been at the school for just over three weeks analysed text, building up and discussing sentences using their increasing vocabulary. Most students either read or are learning to read confidently in English. They also make good progress in numeracy and other subjects, building on their learning in their home countries. Older students are well prepared through a range of qualifications. The results in the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations for the last three years have been commendable for those students who stay for two terms or more.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' behaviour and personal development are good. Students enjoy both their school and boarding experience. Both are well organised, with clear routines and procedures that are consistently implemented and are understood by the students. Students have positive relationships with both teaching and boarding staff. Students interviewed were able to identify a member of staff that they would feel comfortable speaking to with any concerns. Staff provide positive role models. The scheduled boarding activities provide a wide range of leisure and learning opportunities. Student involvement in most activities is compulsory and there are some, such as film viewing and Sunday activities that a few students say they do not always wish to participate in as they already have a very tightly packed schedule. Some students report that they become very tired and have too few opportunities for relaxation, particularly younger ones whose bedtimes are late. The social care inspector agreed that the students had a valid point. Students enjoy taking part in the sports programme where they learn new skills. They receive good support to meet their health needs. The meals are wholesome and there is a good choice; students say that the food is 'tasty'.

Students are eager to take part in lessons and make friends with others. Many of the older students, especially the prefects, act in a caring role towards the younger ones. Students are becoming more confident in expressing themselves in English, are courteous and respectful to staff and keen to help with small tasks both in school and in the boarding house. Current arrangements for securing students' views are limited, but a school council has recently been introduced to provide more opportunities. Attendance is very good. Behaviour is good. The school uses positive behaviour methods, which help support the students in building their self-confidence and self-esteem. No physical restraint has been used. Bullying is not tolerated and the low numbers of incidents that have been identified were dealt with quickly by senior staff. This contributes to students feeling safe. Staffing levels in the boarding houses are currently sufficient but the school confirms that, should numbers of students change, the staff would be increased as required. Boarding staff do not have personal development plans in place and some have not yet completed key training. Some boarding records show gaps in the action taken following communication about students' arising needs. Some new students do not understand all of the documents, which are

written in English.

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students are generally tolerant of each other and have opportunities to learn about people of different faiths and cultures. The school provides students with opportunities to learn about public institutions and services through the wide range of visits outside the school. Racial harmony is well promoted and the school does not promote any political views.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good. Staff quickly develop positive relationships with students. They demonstrate good subject knowledge. They actively engage most of the students in learning, increasing their knowledge, understanding and skills. The small class sizes enable the students to receive individual attention. Students receive concentrated English teaching for half of each day and subject teaching for the other half. Staff plan lessons which meet the learning needs of the students. Although most lessons are single periods that last for an hour, some English lessons are in double or triple periods lasting for two to three hours with only a short break. Students behave well in such lessons but some students, especially the younger ones, find it hard to focus on one subject for such long periods. Conversely, some of the subject lessons, for example in chemistry, are too short at an hour to enable students to complete practical activities. Lessons generally move at a good pace with opportunities provided for student and staff discussion and paired student activities. Teachers frequently refer to the learning objectives, ensuring that the students know what they need to learn. They are given targets for improvement, are aware of them and are given praise for achievement and effort. The rewards system, known as 'the stars and stripes' is used well. Information and communication technology (ICT) is also used well to support learning. For example, in a senior mathematics lesson, students used a commercial mathematics program, which helped challenge them in their learning. Students generally concentrate, are motivated to learn and confirm that the staff help them to understand their work, giving further explanations when needed. Resources are generally good and used well to support learning. The school's assessment procedures for regularly tracking and reporting on students' attainment and progress are effective. Teachers assess students well during lessons, both in English and individual subjects. This continual checking of learning helps the students improve their English and gives the staff an accurate picture of each student's capabilities. A range of formal testing procedures, both in English and through national tests, takes place regularly. Parents and carers are kept very well informed through three reports each term. Students' work is marked but there is insufficient accompanying comment on how the students could improve their work. Frequent homework is used well to support learning.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum is good and meets the specific needs of the students who have come to the school primarily to learn sufficient English so as to proceed on to an English boarding school. The students are taught in English. Provision for students' personal, social, health and citizenship education is embedded within the curriculum. This covers a wide range of planned topics and is delivered through a daily whole-school lesson. The subjects taught are all documented, show clear progression and cover all the required areas of learning. The subject matter is suitable for the students' ages and abilities. Appropriate emphasis in curriculum planning is given to developing skills in speaking, listening, literacy, numeracy and ICT. Older students have the opportunity to gain IGCSE accreditation. Students arrive with different levels of English skills and understanding. The school has addressed this by building appropriate support into the curriculum using specialised teaching. Students acquire both sufficient subject knowledge and technical vocabulary, which prepares them well for their learning in their next school in the United Kingdom. The students are given extensive help and preparation in choosing and sitting examinations for the schools of their choice.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Inadequate**

The provision for the students' welfare, health and safety is inadequate. This is because the proprietors have not ensured that the designated person responsible for child protection has been trained to an appropriate level within the last two years, as required. The policy for safeguarding is not up to date with current legislation. There are good staff recruitment procedures in place and designated staff have been trained in safer recruitment. The proprietor has checked the suitability of staff to work with the students and the information is held on the required single central register of staff appointments. The school has devised and implemented the required range of policies, which meet the latest guidance. These include policies for anti-bullying, behaviour and health and safety. Risk assessment is thorough for all areas, both on and off site. First-aid procedures are good with many staff trained in first aid. Procedures to prevent fire are fully implemented and regular safety checks are carried out including those for fire and electrical equipment. The admission and attendance registers are well maintained and meet the regulations.

Leadership and management**Inadequate**

The leadership and management of the school are inadequate. This is because the proprietors have failed to ensure that all the independent school regulations and national minimum standards are met with reference to safeguarding. The school's leaders have devised a school development plan but this does not focus sufficiently on raising standards. The findings from monitoring processes have been shown to drive forward improvement in boarding practice since the previous social care visit, but some aspects still require improvement.

A new Director of Studies has only recently joined the school and has made a positive start in initiating changes. Accuracy of judgements of the quality of teaching was shown during joint lesson observations, when the inspector and Director of Studies were in agreement about the quality of the lessons seen. He is now beginning to focus on raising the quality of teaching through staff training and development. The required information for parents, carers and others is available on the school website or on request, but the policy for safeguarding does not meet current legislation. The school's procedures for handling complaints meet requirements. The school premises meet the regulations and an ambitious project is just beginning for a new classroom block. The quality of the boarding accommodation is good. Students appreciate the 'family style' environment and the opportunities that they have to make friends with other international students. Responses from staff questionnaires were very positive. Due to translation difficulties no responses were received from parents and carers via Parent View, but a parent or carer communicated to say how pleased they were with the school.

Outcomes for boarders**Adequate****Quality of boarding provision and care****Adequate****Boarders' safety****Inadequate****Leadership and management of the boarding provision****Inadequate**

What inspection judgements mean

School and boarding		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education and care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education and care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education and care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	135486
Social care unique reference number	SC367610
Inspection number	424349
DfE registration number	865/6041

This inspection was carried out 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. 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.

Type of school	Language college
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	8–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	51
Proprietor	Frances and Ian Henson
Headteacher	Frances Henson
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 November 2011
Termly fees (day pupils)	£6,950
Termly fees (boarders)	£9,950
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