

# Bellerbys College London

Bounty House, Stowage, London, SE8 3DE

## Inspection dates

9–11 June 2015

## Overall outcome

**Unmet independent school standards identified**

## Reason for the inspection

- The inspection was undertaken at the request of the Department for Education, registration authority for independent schools to evaluate the quality of education (part 1 of the regulations for independent schools), welfare arrangements for students (part 3) and the quality of leadership and management (part 8).
- Social Care Regulatory Inspectors evaluated the extent to which the boarding provision meets the requirements of the national minimum standards for students' welfare, behaviour and safety. Inspectors checked the college's management and development of boarding, and the deployment and suitability of staffing arrangements.

## Main findings

- This inspection found that a number of the independent school standards are not met, relating to the quality of education and welfare arrangements for students. Additionally, a number of the national minimum standards relating to the welfare and safety of boarding students, and the deployment and suitability of staffing arrangements were also found to be unmet.
- The implementation of the quality of teaching, assessment and behaviour policies could not be seen during the inspection because most students were either on holiday or they had finished their courses and had left.
- The proprietor has ensure that written curriculum policies are supported by schemes of work. Leaders supplement the curriculum with cross-faculty focus days, based on British values and preparation for life in British society. Displays from recent workshops include positive student comment; for example, 'Tolerance is accepting others without considering their backgrounds and still treating them the same.'
- Leaders ensure the curriculum incorporates opportunities for students to debate and explore issues of respect and equality. Schemes of work link English and personal, health and social education (PHSE) and enable students to explore topical themes, for example the 'Je suis Charlie' incident and same-sex marriage legislation in Ireland.
- Leaders actively involve students in feedback about the quality of education. Student council meetings include an evaluation of teaching and academic support, which is usually positive. In rare reports of concern, leaders take appropriate action which is noted at subsequent meetings.
- The college's enrichment programme is effective. Students experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Students of compulsory school age additionally attend weekly physical education lessons to improve their fitness and skills in different sports.
- Students benefit from the college's specialism as a business college. Enterprise events are actively promoted for students. Links with local business and higher education

institutions are strong.

- The college prepares students for their future careers or admission into higher education establishments in the United Kingdom or overseas. This is its core purpose. In 2014, 78% of students were accepted into their first or second choice of university.
- The proprietor ensures a framework is in place to evaluate students' performance using national norms. Teachers' assessment of students' coursework is thoroughly moderated internally, within the Study Group. Assessment board meetings are held at the end of the course with representatives of Lancaster University to validate the final results of the foundation programme.
- A high proportion of students speak English as an additional language. Students improve their fluency and literacy skills through Foundation English Skills (FES) and English Skills for University Studies (ESUS). Performance information indicates that this initiative is helping students to acquire new knowledge and make good progress.
- The college does not, however, take into account the aptitudes and needs of all students because some groups do not achieve as well as they should.
- Students are admitted to the college with a wide range of language needs and abilities, however attainment in GCSEs is too low. In 2013, 13 students entered these examinations; 99% attained A–G grades but only 66% achieved the higher grades A\*–C. In 2014, results declined further; of the 26 students who sat five or more GCSEs, 95% attained A–G grades and 31% A\*–C. This is significantly below the national average. Boys' attainment is significantly lower than girls'.
- Leaders identify the need for additional challenge for most able students. This is a priority in 2015/16. Additionally, only one student in college receives specific support through an education, health and care plan. Leaders say students and their families are reluctant to acknowledge potential special educational needs. Regardless of this, the identification of students who may have additional needs is not fully effective, and as a result their needs are not being identified or met.
- The college has failed to make arrangements to promote the welfare of students. The arrangements do not have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. A high turnover of staff in senior leadership and residential positions has resulted in weakness in provision for students' welfare and safety.
- The director of student services has changed four times in the last 18 months. The current leader, seconded from within the Study Group, is named as the designated person for safeguarding; however her required two-yearly training is out of date. The proprietor failed to identify the lapse in accreditation. The lapse was uncovered by inspectors. This reflects badly on the robustness of the college's safeguarding systems.
- The Study Group safeguarding policy and child protection policies are compliant with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance' March 2015. This is available on the college website. These policies are adapted for students attending the London campus.
- Other policies have not been reviewed by the stated time, 21 March 2015, notably those for physical restraint, anti-bullying, cultural development, complaints and substance abuse. This is due to changes in the strategic leadership accompanied by an inefficient handover of information at a senior level.
- Documentation does show an effective implementation of the college's behaviour policy. Student surveys, incident records and student council feedback provide positive evidence about students' conduct, engagement and attitudes.
- Leaders insist on a zero tolerance approach to bullying. They robustly challenge homophobic views. Students say there is no bullying.

- College records show compliance with health and safety laws and effective implementation of the written health and safety policy. Fire safety records indicate a detailed and efficient approach to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. First aid is administered competently.
- The deployment of academic staff was not seen on inspection.
- Admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with Education Regulations 2006. The attendance of boarding students is poor. Two new attendance officers are beginning to demonstrate a useful impact. For example, figures provided by the college show a 6% increase in attendance when compared to the same time last year. In 2014, the overall attendance for students under 18 years of age was 88.5%. This is well below the national average. Leaders record too many authorised absences from college, for example 11% for students enrolled on the ELPP course.
- The school keeps thorough risk assessments for educational trips, college security and its maintenance of premises. However, appropriate action is not taken by the proprietor to mitigate potential additional risks to students. This is exemplified by the failure to anticipate the impact of high staff turnover on systems to maintain the safety, welfare and emotional support for students.
- The organisation has not been successful in appointing and keeping permanent leaders. The majority of senior leaders are in 'acting up' positions. This creates insecurity among staff and weaknesses in the college's systems to ensure students' welfare and safety.
- New staff, such as the acting Principal, attendance officers, the nurse and the acting director of boarding, have the confidence of staff and students. However, it is too early to see a sustained impact of their work on the welfare of students, particularly boarders.
- Current leaders have acted robustly to tackle incidents of poor staff conduct. However, inconsistency in strategic leadership has resulted in some less effective practice becoming commonplace. Current systems to monitor the college's work and to ensure that students attend regularly and all achieve well are not secure.
- The leadership and management of the college do not consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively to ensure that all national minimum standards for boarding schools are met.
- The national minimum standards regarding child protection, management and staffing are not consistently met.
- Safeguarding practice is inconsistent due to the high turnover of college leaders, boarding managers and residential staff. During the inspection only one boarding supervisor was a permanent member of staff, known and trusted by boarders. This has an impact on boarders' perceptions of safety.
- Current leaders have taken robust action to ensure the professional conduct of all boarding staff. They addressed significant safeguarding concerns.
- The high turnover and sickness level of residential staff has created the need for the extensive use of agency staff. No records were available to show that all agency staff receive an appropriate induction into their role upon appointment.
- The records do not specify that the agency staff were given any information regarding child protection and safeguarding.
- Boarding managers have failed to monitor the provision robustly. For example, duty rosters have not been maintained accurately to reflect staff on duty.
- Other boarding standards are met. The promotion of positive behaviour and relationships between young people is particularly strong.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

### The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), and associated requirements.

Ensure that written policies, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an education, health and care plan.	2(1), 2(1)(b)(i)
Ensure arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at school.	7, 7(a)
Ensure that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.	7(b)
Ensure arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school.	8, 8(a)
Ensure that such arrangements have regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.	8(b)
Ensure leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that independent school standards are met consistently.	34(1), 34(1)(a)
Fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.	34(1)(b)
Actively promote the well-being of students.	34(1)(c)

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

The college ensures 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.	NMS 11
The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.	NMS 13.1
There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff.	NMS 13.2
The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role.	NMS 13.3
The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.	NMS 13.4
The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the well-being of pupils.	NMS 13.5
The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.	NMS 13.8

Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding.	NMS 15.1
The staff supervising boarders outside 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
There is at least one adult member of staff sleeping in each boarding house at night, responsible for the boarders in the house.	NMS 15.7

## Inspection team

Ann Debono, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lee Kirwin	Social Care Inspector
Seka Graovac	Social Care Inspector

## Information about this school

- Bellerbys College in Greenwich is one of four colleges of this name in the United Kingdom. It is owned by Study Group, which owns 'English as a foreign language' international schools and colleges in the United Kingdom, Australia and the USA. The college was established in 1997 and moved to its current premises in 2004. Embassy CES, an associated institution offering language training, occupies the same site.
- The aim of Bellerbys College is to prepare students for admission to British universities.
- There are 387 students on roll aged from 14 to 25 years. This includes 13 students of compulsory school age and 48 post-16 students who are taking A-level courses. The remaining students take English language courses, foundation, undergraduate and pre-masters programmes.
- There is one student with an education, health and care plan. No students have a statement of special educational needs. All students are from overseas; most come from Vietnam, China and Russian-speaking countries. The college is non-selective but students are required to achieve minimum standards in English and academic studies in their own country prior to the offer of a place.
- There are 110 students in residential boarding accommodation and 11 students in locally arranged 'homestay' placements with host families.
- At the time of the inspection 20 students were boarding.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134827
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC063056
<b>Inspection number</b>	464461
<b>DfE registration number</b>	203/6376

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent
<b>School status</b>	Independent day and boarding tutorial college
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	15–25
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	387
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	110
<b>Proprietor</b>	Bellerbys Education Services
<b>Acting Principal</b>	Alison Baines
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	May 2014 (social care inspection)
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£11,000 - £19,000
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£18,000 - £28,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8694 7000
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