

Hockerill Anglo European-College

Hockerill Anglo European College, Dunmow Road, BISHOP'S STORTFORD, Hertfordshire, CM23 5HX

**Inspection dates**

26/01/2016 to 28/01/2016

**The overall experiences and progress of children and young people**

**Outstanding 1**

The quality of care and support

Outstanding 1

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding 1

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding 1

**Summary of key findings**

**The boarding provision is outstanding because**

- The impact of the boarding experience is extremely beneficial. Boarding enhances the personal and social development of young people. They positively thrive at the school and make exceptional academic progress.
- Young people’s behaviour and conduct is extremely good. They are motivated to learn and to share the boarding accommodation harmoniously.
- Young people’s safety and welfare is paramount. Safeguarding arrangements in the school are highly effective.
- There are many stimulating activity opportunities. Young people engage whole heartedly with the wider community.
- Young people are empowered and supported to share their ideas and debate their views in the boarding community.
- The staff team are highly experienced and professional; they are valued and respected by young people.
- The accommodation is well appointed and provides a homely, comfortable and spacious environment that young people take pride in.
- Monitoring of the school is rigorous and drives future improvement plans.

- One area is identified for improvement; some boarding records lack detail and relevance.

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools**

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools

#### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the records that support boarders' welfare contain up to date information that is relevant and comprehensive.

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out within four hours of telephone notification to the school and took place over three days. Discussions with the designated officer for safeguarding, health professionals, governors, staff and parents informed the inspection judgements. The inspection included scrutiny of documents, records and observation of practice. Three Parent View responses were obtained prior to the inspection.

## Inspection team

Deirdra Keating	Lead social care inspector
Natalie Burton	Social care inspector
Kristen Judd	Social care inspector

## **Full Report**

### **Information about this school**

Hockerill Anglo-European College is an academy converter, situated within easy access of Bishop's Stortford town centre. It offers education to 851 pupils aged from 11 to 17 years, including 387 boarders. Young people are accommodated in six boarding houses, which are located within the college campus. All boarding houses provide self-contained facilities that include showers, bathrooms, toilets, common rooms, games rooms and kitchen facilities. The boarding provision was last inspected in April 2012.

## Inspection Judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Outstanding**

Young people emphatically value the boarding experience. They say that they are really happy and would highly recommend boarding. They recognise that boarding builds their resilience, their independence and self-discipline. Overall, young people excel in their academic studies, musical talent and sporting ability, making an outstanding difference to their lives.

The boarding experience has had an extremely positive impact on young peoples' personal and social development. Young people learn through coaching from highly experienced staff and positive peer role modelling. This has built a culture of young people who respect and nurture one another. This allows all individuals to feel respected and equally valued.

The quality of boarding continually improves and evolves to meet individual needs. Staff share best practice with others from the sector, producing exceptional results. Parents provide extremely positive testimonies about the school's superb results and exceptional care. Young people are motivated and happy to board. They positively flourish in the boarding accommodation.

Academic success is demonstrated in league table results. The International Baccalaureate curriculum attracts young people from all over the world, creating an international culture and building linguistic diversity. Accommodation is organised to support linguistic progress, room sharing is based on young people with a different linguistic background. This promotes spoken English and eliminates language cliques. Humanities studies are taught in two other languages, promoting optimum linguistic results. Additionally, music concerts are held at the school and involve staff and students, this attracts international musical talent.

The boarding provision is organised to ensure a safe and orderly provision. Staff are ample in number, highly established and trained for their roles. Rigorous monitoring and internal reviews ensure that boarding continues to improve and that it benefits young people.

There are ample opportunities for young people to share their ideas and views. A number of forums represent boarding life. Young people actively take part in committees that put forward their views. The meeting records show that suggestions with majority support are actioned. These include new resources, menu options, organisation of events, house décor and health.

Young people emerge as confident, polite and well-rounded individuals. They hone their study skills in preparation for further education. The recognised success of others inspires young people to work hard and realise their academic, sporting and musical potential. Staff maintain high aspirations, recognising individual talent and achievement. This gives everyone the chance to excel and realise ambitious goals. Young people are planning careers in medicine, economics, business and politics.

## The quality of care and support

## Outstanding

Staff provide exemplary role models for young people. Relationships between staff and young people are supportive, nurturing young people as they adjust to boarding life. External support options are also easily accessible. Daily briefing meetings ensure teaching staff and boarding staff share information and use this to respond to young peoples' needs.

A considerable range of extra-curricular activities provides an array of exciting opportunities for young people, supporting them to develop new interests. These include; horse riding, golf, sports club and student led clubs such as debating. Young people have access to a local gymnasium and they make positive contributions to the wider community. This includes fund and awareness raising for several charities.

An extensive refurbishment programme has upgraded the showers and bathrooms. These provide ample room for washing with individual privacy. All communal areas and common rooms are well maintained, spotlessly clean and freshly decorated. This reflects the tastes and preferences of young people. There are photos and displays of achievement in each house. Bedrooms are equipped well to meet study needs and provide privacy. Bed spaces are adorned with photos and personal belongings, helping young people to have an individual sense of belonging, family and home.

Young people take part in sports fixtures, representing the school in rugby, hockey and football. They are strongly encouraged to keep active and healthy. They benefit from a fully equipped and well run health centre. Registered health professionals provide surgeries and drop in clinics, dealing with physical and psychological needs. Experience and knowledge of individuals promotes holistic support. Staff recognise the impact of exam pressure and the school timetable. Young people are guided clearly about medication and assessed for competence in self-medicating. A therapist based at the health centre provides counselling support.

The school refectory provides three hot meals daily. These include a variety of menu options with an international flavour. Balanced menu options include vegetarian dishes and lighter meals; individual dietary requirements are unobtrusively met. Beautifully presented food provides healthy and appetising meal choices. Evening snacks, drinks and fruit are supplied in each boarding house. Caterers provide formal dinners, where young people enjoy a three course dinner with a musical interlude. This provides a formal dining experience, building on social etiquette.

Staff keep records on each young person. Welfare plans are devised for young people presenting with any concerns. The plans provide details of concerns and are shared with all those involved. They highlight concerns supporting vulnerable young people. They

include young peoples' views, however, some plans lack detailed information and background context.

There are ample opportunities for young people to share their ideas and views, including forums for many components of boarding life. Young people actively take part in a number of boarding committees that represent their ideas and wishes. Committee records demonstrate that suggestions with majority support are acted upon. These include new resources, menu options, organisation of events, house décor and health.

Young people can use a phone when they choose to ring home and are able to use mobile phones during agreed times. An advisable settling in period without calls home helps young people adjust to being away. This starts boarding life by encouraging young people to build friendships and support within the boarding community.

### **How well children and young people are protected**

### **Outstanding**

Young people say that they feel safe, and they are undoubtedly safe. Parents spoken to have absolute confidence in the school's ability to ensure young peoples' safety and supervision. Information displayed throughout the accommodation informs young people how to make a complaint or raise a concern. This is highlighted in boarding information talks. Every young person spoken to reiterated the role of independent listener, along with external help line numbers. This gives young people a trusted adult to whom they can raise concerns.

Staff have a comprehensive understanding of potential risks to young people and are proactive in their approach to reduce risk. Trust time is gained; young people earn this by building on their basic house status and demonstrating their understanding of the agreed safety guidelines. Young people leave the site in pairs and always wear school uniform for recognition. Staff conduct random checks to monitor young people's whereabouts and conduct while out. This teaches young people about safe conduct in the local community.

The school has two designated safeguarding leads. This enables joint decision making and ensures there is always someone available to refer a concern to. The school has a robust multi-disciplinary approach, whereby staff from education, boarding, the health centre along with the designated safeguarding lead share information to safeguard young people. This ensures that an effective team monitors vulnerable young people. Additional support for vulnerable young people is detailed in boarding welfare plans. Staff share the plans as necessary with all parties, to ensure monitoring of vulnerable individuals. Serious concerns or disclosures are referred immediately to children's services.

The designated member of staff routinely reports allegations to the designated officer in the local authority, in line with local policy. The school benefits from a good working relationship with the local authority officer. This provides transparency and objectivity in decision making. Internal investigations demonstrate transparency and honesty; reporting is clear. Learning points are used productively to prevent future reoccurrences.

Staff understand and consistently implement systems to safeguard young peoples' welfare.

There are no incidents of young people leaving the site without permission or being unaccounted for. This demonstrates young peoples' comprehensive understanding of the rules. Young people are busy and engaged outside the school day. Good role modelling by senior peers has resulted in a culture where young people adhere to basic rules and monitor one another's whereabouts.

There are no concerns in regard to child sexual exploitation. Staff have a good understanding of the signs to be aware of, in particular, for those young people who go home regularly.

Incidents relating to alcohol and smoking are minimal and managed in line with school policy. The school takes immediate action through an internal exclusion. Staff are clear this is not tolerated. Preventive action is taken in educating young people, staff and parents, on the dangers of alcohol and substance misuse, and helping young people to understand the associated risks and the zero tolerance approach.

On occasion, young people superficially self-harm. Welfare plans are implemented and young people are supported through inter-agency working. Young people access cognitive behavioural therapy; they are supported by their peers and staff. All young people spoken to could identify more than one person they could talk to. A buddying system helps young people to feel safe. Staff are very conscious of the stress for young people and they provide relaxation methods, such as mindfulness sessions, meditation groups and yoga classes. Young people say that staff remind them of the need to take a break, ensuring that they achieve a sensible work life balance.

Risk assessments of trips and activities detail safety measures and protocols. The recording of these is not always consistent with accurate information.

Internet safety is fully explained to young people. The amount of access and time is subject to house status and grows with age and responsibility. A robust monitoring systems alerts staff of any areas of concern. If trust is breached, young people lose their privileges.

Recruitment is robust and includes certificates of good conduct for overseas staff. In addition, all staff family members living on site have a written conduct agreement. Young people are involved in the recruitment of the senior leadership team.

There are occasional incidents of bullying. These are managed robustly and quickly. Positive peer role modelling and a good house captain and prefect system ensures dynamics are monitored. Staff have a vigilant awareness of what constitutes bullying, including isolation or discrimination of a young person. The wide difference in culture and nationality generates a cosmopolitan and diverse population of young people who treat one another with care and respect.

Young people's behaviour is exemplary and consistent throughout the school. Staff stringently maintain high expectations and lead by example. Positive behaviour is endorsed and closely monitored. Each house has autonomy in the management of

behavioural issues. Sanctions include an additional chore or loss of house status. There have been no sanctions and no use of physical intervention. Parents highlight the positive atmosphere, high expectations from the start and a strong commitment to discipline as key in the successful management of young people's behaviour.

The site is physically safe and secure. Visitors are carefully monitored, signed in and chaperoned. Maintenance is of a high standard with minor repairs completed quickly. This ensures boarding accommodation is free from hazards and young people are physically safe. The houses are individually risk assessed. Fire drills and checks are completed regularly. Overall, the health and safety of the provision is robust.

Staff support young people to take reasonable risks, developing their understanding of personal safety. This promotes independence and develops their resilience.

## **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers** Outstanding

The boarding provision is exceptionally well managed. There is extremely strong leadership, through the Principal, Director of Boarding and the Governing Body. Highly effective policies and procedures underpin the running of the boarding provision, which is constantly evaluated. There is a detailed development plan in place. This results in a highly effective boarding environment that provides outstanding care to young people.

There is a highly qualified and experienced team. New staff are supported by an induction that prepares them for their roles. Staff benefit from good levels of supervision and appraisal. They have targets to achieve in relation to their boarding responsibilities. These are continually assessed, and reviewed annually. Staff have relevant training and opportunities for boarding related professional development.

Boarding houses are well staffed and run smoothly and efficiently. There are strong links between the boarding and academic staff. Effective communication ensures that all staff are aware of any concerns. Boarders value highly the care and support they receive. Staff are enthusiastic and speak highly of the young people in their care. Staff say they feel exceptionally well supported. All staff have high aspirations for all young people.

There have been no complaints, however, clear and detailed procedures are in place. Any concerns are dealt with informally within the boarding houses. Records show action is taken on the very few concerns that have been raised.

External monitoring visits routinely take place. Governors visit the boarding houses regularly. The reports that governors complete are thorough. These clearly demonstrate time spent talking to young people and evaluate the boarding facilities. Young people have information detailing help lines and independent support. The independent listener attends induction, explains her role and meets those new to the school. This provides

external support outside of the staff.

Policies are updated regularly and meet the requirements. They are available on the website for prospective parents to peruse and they support best practice. Records are maintained, however, there are a number of records that hold minimal information and others that repeat information that is not relevant. These records require a review. This minor shortfall does not detract from the excellent practice and high quality care that young people receive.

Feedback from parents is unanimous in extremely high praise of the school. One parent spoken to said: 'My children have thrived, there is an abundance of respect for one another. Boarding is brilliant, I collect them from the school every weekend, the boys are so polite and helpful.' Another said: 'They build rounded individuals, that makes for fantastic progress in all areas.' A third parent summarised: 'I would give a glowing report about the school, it's pretty amazing and there is not a day goes by where I am not hugely grateful that he is there.' Parents cited communication and organisation of boarding as optimum strengths of the school. Forums for parents include an international boarders' weekend. This provides taster activities, recitals and dining for parents from overseas. This gives a flavour of the school, experience of the locality, a sample of cuisine and demonstrates young peoples' talents.

## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136482
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC061728
<b>DfE registration number</b>	

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Boarding School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	387
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	11 to 18
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Richard Markham
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	20/04/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 658451
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@hockerill.com">admin@hockerill.com</a>

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