

# Abbey College in Malvern

Abbey College in Malvern, 253 Wells Road, MALVERN, Worcestershire, WR14 4JF

<b>Inspection dates</b>	03/11/2015 to 05/11/2015
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	Good
The quality of care and support	Good
How well children and young people are protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings

### The boarding provision is good because

- The overall effectiveness of the boarding provision is good. This is because young people are well supported and cared for which is consistent with the college's wider ethos and aims.
- New young people from a range of different countries are quickly helped to settle into boarding life and engage in their chosen academic programme.
- Cultural enrichment is a key strength of the college as young people from many different countries benefit from their stay in England. They gain as much exposure as possible to the diversity within Britain and its wider society.
- There is an enabling and positive atmosphere in the college. Young people are supportive of each other and respectful of their individual nationalities and identities.
- Young people willingly participate in the many social events and sporting activities organised by the college. This helps them develop as individuals and to make friends with other young people from around the world.
- The impact of the boarding experience and the quality of care on young people's personal development and well-being is good. Young people enjoy their boarding experience; build lasting relationships and value being part of the boarding community.
- Staff fully understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. The safety of young people is prioritised which provides for a comfortable and secure residential and learning environment.
- All young people have access to a tutorial system that is helpful in practice and which is being development further to improve personal support.
- Some aspects of the college's quality assurance systems are not strong or robust enough in support of sustaining development and improvement of the service. The college does not have an overall development plan in place.

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

The school does not meet all national minimum standards for boarding schools.

The school must meet the following national minimum standards.

- 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. (National minimum standard 13.1)
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate. (National minimum standard 13.9)

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Devise, implement and monitor a college wide development plan.

## Information about this inspection

The inspection of boarding and welfare arrangements took place following the appropriate notice period for this type of visit. Two inspectors reviewed the policies, documentation, boarding provision and organisation over a period of three days. Inspectors spoke to key staff, young people and the designated officer for the local authority in which the school is situated. In addition, observations of boarding routines and practices were made at different times of the day and evening.

## Inspection team

Julian Mason

Lead social care inspector

Dawn Bennett

Social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

Abbey College in Malvern provides privately run flexible programmes of education and learning. These are in both the academic field at pre-university level (IGCSE, A level and Foundation Courses) and in the English language field. All courses are offered on a co-educational and fully residential basis to young people aged 14 years and over. The students come from overseas and they can join at any time during a course. Full English language support is available for all overseas academic students. Abbey College in Malvern also provides Easter and Summer Courses for overseas students. The college is set in a 70-acre campus. Accommodation is provided in a number of onsite boarding houses. Host families are not currently used. Abbey College in Malvern organises its boarding accommodation on the basis of age and gender.

## Inspection Judgements

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

**Good**

Young people's boarding experience and the progress they make are good. They are able to achieve academically and socially as well as prepare for their transition into higher education where they have chosen this route. For those young people who are aiming to go to a UK university, the college provides effective advice, guidance and support to help them achieve this. The overall feedback from young people about their boarding experiences and the relationships they have with staff, teachers and each other is very positive.

Young people feel safe and experience respect and consideration. They live in an inclusive environment where they do not encounter discrimination or disadvantage. They develop a good sense of personal responsibility and a kind and tolerant approach to others. In addition, they also learn about each other and where they are from. The diversity of the college's boarding community is actively celebrated which results in a greater appreciation of other countries and cultures.

All young people are from overseas and the vast majority speak English as an additional language. Young people are provided with and access a well-established EFL (English as a Foreign Language) programme. The college gives a high priority to linguistic needs so that young people can develop academically and socially. Progress is closely tracked along with promoting the use of English in everyday situations to help improve language skills and personal confidence.

Young people have fun and enjoy themselves participating in the wide range of clubs, activities and outings. Many are organised as a result of young people's suggestions and ideas. These help build on their academic learning and strongly promote involvement and participation in college life. This helps young people make friends, increase social networks and further develop language, communication and social skills. Young people say, 'we are friends together' and 'I have made true friends, who will be my friends for life.'

Young people contribute to the operation and development of boarding. There are regular boarding house meetings where young people are encouraged to share their opinions and ideas regarding the service and how it may be improved and developed further. For example, the times and arrangements for prep have been changed and modified as a direct result of young people's feedback and suggestions. This was sighted by many young people as an example of the college listening to them and their views.

Young people are also beginning to develop positive contacts within the local community. They have a college football team who play in a local league. A communities club has started this term with the aim of identifying voluntary roles they can play in the local town. Staff also support a young person who is an excellent table tennis player to attend a local club. In the headteacher's summer term report it states, 'She always studies hard and is one of the most conscientious members of college. We are all very proud of her table tennis achievements outside the college, which have helped her grow in confidence.'

The progress of young people is monitored through regular staff meetings, tutorials and boarding house meetings. The contribution boarding makes to their growth and development and how proactively young people use it to enhance their academic learning is now reported on by the headteacher in termly reports. Young people contribute to the operation and development of boarding. There are regular boarding house meetings where young people are encouraged to

share their opinions and ideas regarding the service and how it may be improved.

Young people form positive, resilient relationships with teachers, boarding staff and peers.

Young people say, 'they (staff) are good listeners', 'if you have problems they will talk to you and help you sort it out' and 'they are very kind.' One young person also stated that, 'we try and help each other.'

Healthcare arrangements promote young people's health and well-being. All appropriate staff have completed training on the administration of medication. They work closely with parents and young people to identify and address any medical concerns. Some staff also have first aid training and are well placed to deal with any accidents or illnesses with the support of the matron. The college provides a comprehensive programme of PSHEE (personal, social, health and economic education). Young people learn about how to lead safe, healthy lifestyles and to make informed decisions about their own health and well-being.

### **The quality of care and support**

**Good**

Young people's individual cultural, social and learning needs are well met. This is because the welfare team have a good knowledge of the specific requirements of an international group of young people living away from home. There are good systems and practices in place to welcome young people to the school and to help them become accustomed to living in England. For example, young people have helped to produce an induction video for new arrivals that helps inform everyone about college life and what to expect. Because of these arrangements, young people from many different countries are quickly helped to settle into boarding life and engage in their chosen academic programme.

Staff have a good focus on all aspects of each young person's developmental and welfare needs. The headteacher continues to develop and improve the link between academic success and the boarding experience. This ensures that all staff at the college work together to enable young people to make positive progress and achieve their personal aims and ambitions.

The boarding accommodation and communal areas continue to be developed and improved. For example, the dining room has recently been decorated and new tables and chairs provided. A new quiet room for young people is currently being developed within the common room area. Where parts of the college are looking tired and worn there is good awareness by the bursar and managers of the remedial work needed. Young people feel safe in and around the school site and grounds. They like their houses and feel able to make their bedrooms into personal spaces where they can relax and feel comfortable.

Overall, young people enjoy the food they are provided with. They acknowledge the challenge faced by the college in providing for young people from many different parts of the world. However, they appreciate the time and effort taken by the catering manager to ensure menus reflect the international nature of the college. The catering department is actively involved in the life of boarding. They run evening cookery clubs, which are very popular with young people. They provide themed menus that support evening activities and events such as a recent Halloween night, which was very successful. They also provide food for cultural events. For example, the lunar New Year and other international celebrations. Young people with specific dietary needs are well catered for. Mealtimes are relaxed, social events that young people enjoy.

All young people learn about British culture and values while at the school. For example, they not only learn English to fulfil their academic studies but also learn to converse socially. They can choose from a range of British food that is always available in the school canteen.

## How well children and young people are protected

**Good**

The effectiveness with which the staff keep young people safe and promote their welfare is good. They consistently ensure the service provides a safe environment where young people feel comfortable in their surroundings. Young people report that bullying is not a problem and if any unwanted behaviour occurs this is quickly dealt with by staff. There are robust welfare arrangements that protect young people from harm and that help equip them with practical skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe. One young person summarising, 'we are safe here and I think we are looked after properly.'

Safeguarding is given a high priority and staff are aware of their duties and responsibilities. This is underpinned by child protection training that also reflects current national priorities around safeguarding. For example, staff have recently completed training around the risks relating to radicalisation and the Prevent agenda.

All staff closely monitor young people's welfare. Concerns are usually referred to the welfare services team in the first instance who have a track record in responding and acting quickly as and when issues arise. Tutors work closely with welfare staff sharing concerns at every level and coordinating any necessary actions. No recent referrals to the designated officer for the local authority or local social work duty team have been necessary.

Young people's behaviour is managed successfully both in and outside of the college. Sanctions are proportionate to circumstances and are mainly focus around academic discipline and conduct. Some sanctions are given for breaches in college rules but these are few and far between. Young people are unanimous in their view that the college is fair when it comes to helping them with their behaviour. The use of reasonable force or physical intervention is not a feature of how the college manages behaviour. The introduction of a new merit system has further improved the college's approach to supporting good behaviour. Young people really appreciate the rewards that they have earned for behaving well.

The team successfully integrate safe working practices into the college and boarding environment. Risk assessments and procedures are effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed. All domestic installations and equipment are regularly serviced and maintained in good working order. All aspects relating to fire safety are considered. Young people are additionally protected because they participate in fire evacuations and know the correct steps to take in the event of an emergency.

There have been no serious accidents relating to the residential accommodation. All activities linked to boarding are risk assessed by welfare services staff and overseen by the headteacher. Staff know how to minimise risks to young people without hindering their opportunities to explore new activities or experiences.

The vetting of new staff is carried out very carefully to ensure they are suitable to work with young people. All new staff are subject to an enhanced DBS check and are required to work a probationary period where their practice and performance is assessed against the relevant job description.

## The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

**Requires improvement**

The management and organisation of the college's welfare and boarding provision requires improvement. Overall, the college has an effective leadership and management team. A new headteacher is in place and has implemented changes and improvements to boarding. Staff understand the importance and the value of working together and feel that they are well

supported and trained. Young people's progress, safety and welfare are central to the way in which academic and boarding services are arranged. There is a positive celebration of international boarding and the overall enabling culture of the college is a clear strength that benefits everyone.

Young people are guided through and know what services they can expect from the college, how they will be cared for and who they will be studying and living with. A clear statement of the college's boarding principles and practices is available for parents and others needing this information. The college website is also easily accessed and includes a range of related information for young people and parents who need to know about how the college works.

Young people, their parents and agents are provided with information in an appropriate format about how to complain. Young people are clear that staff listen to them and are responsive if they have a complaint or concern to raise. This approach has resulted in most complaints being resolved quickly and informally. One complaint from a neighbour has been made but this was resolved swiftly.

Young people continue to progress, grow in confidence and expand their experiences because the boarding provision continues to be developed. For example, the headteacher has created a new post that focuses on young people's experiences. The 'student experiences' post holder is leading a drive to enhance academic learning through a growing programme of extra-curricular activity, which run in the evenings and at weekends. One young person stating, 'I like the activities, there's lots you can do if you want to.'

Young people's academic success and further social opportunities are being strengthened. The headteacher is actively involved in boarding and is a housemaster living in accommodation attached to a boarding house. He has recently improved the termly college report to young people and their parents to include a section written by him. He is using this to celebrate individual achievements and to identify where young people can strengthen their learning through greater participation in boarding life. This is particularly the case where young people need to strengthen their English language skills.

The new headteacher provides clear leadership and works to forge agreement within the different staff groups across the teaching and the residential provision. The headteacher is visible and is constantly interacting with young people and staff with regular discussions about the college's strengths, identifying deficiencies and setting about making improvements. However, necessary systems for formal monitoring of the college's operation are not yet strong enough to support the headteacher's approach to improvement. Although monitoring and evaluation takes place it is not coherent or fully reflective of the necessary approaches needed as set out in national minimum standards.

The proprietor is involved and oversees the college's operation. However, there is no formal process that can be used to inform managers about any necessary actions or improvements. In the absence of any formal assessments, it is hard to determine how feedback from proprietor monitoring is impacting on the provision of boarding services. Although the headteacher is scrutinising key areas of welfare and boarding this is not reflected in any coherent way through current quality assurance processes or monitoring.

The headteacher has devised an action plan as a result of feedback received from returned young people's surveys. Their views are sought across a wide range of operational areas to help the college improve and develop. Managers respond to this feedback but this information is not used to inform any college wide development plan. In the absence of a comprehensive plan, it is difficult to know how the senior management team can fully assess progress and the impact their actions are having on the college's provision and performance overall.



## 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>	117035
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC043035
<b>DfE registration number</b>	885/6026

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>	46
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	14 to 19
<b>Headteacher</b>	Colin Spicer
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	28 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01684 892300
<b>Email address</b>	principal@abbeycollege.co.uk

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