

Carfax College

39–42 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX1 2EP

Inspection dates	31/10/2016 to 01/11/2016	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Good	2
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The boarding provision is good because

- There are good arrangements in place to assess, approve and monitor the accommodation provided by host families.
- Host families are provided with good support and guidance. They speak positively of the approach and availability of the welfare officer to them.
- Pupils enjoy positive and constructive relationships with their host families and college staff.
- Pupils have a range of adults that are readily available, whom they can talk to about any issue that concerns them.
- Safeguarding pupils is given top priority. It is a standard agenda item at the fortnightly welfare meeting. The principal ensures that all issues are followed up and there are learning points.
- Senior staff demonstrate a good understanding of what constitutes private fostering and their responsibility to refer to the local authority when necessary.
- Pupils enjoy a range of activities arranged by the school or host families. Overseas pupils have opportunities to fully experience British culture.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standard for boarding schools:

- 13.1 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that home-stay families understand the issues surrounding e-safety and are confident in keeping pupils as safe as possible in the cyber world.
- Complete the revision of the missing person policy.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection with one hour's notice. Four pupils under the age of 18 were accommodated with host families at the time of inspection. Three were spoken to over a lunch period. The principal and welfare officer were interviewed. A range of host families were visited or spoken to by telephone. Contact was made with the local statutory safeguarding authority. A range of documentation concerning host families was scrutinised, as well as safeguarding records. Email contact was made with parents who live overseas, via their agents, and the proprietor. There were no responses on Parent View to inform this inspection.

This was the first inspection since the school registered as a boarding school in August 2015. An education inspection took place in June 2014 for which there is a separate published report.

Inspection team

Keith Riley

Lead social care inspector

Janet Fraser

Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Carfax College is an independent tutorial school providing one-to-one tuition or tuition in very small groups for up to 24 pupils. The college is not academically selective, and seeks to cater for all pupils, from 11 to 21 years old, who would benefit from the tutorial system with a highly individualised programme. A range of British and overseas pupils are accommodated with host families who live locally and who are approved by the college. The college offers full-time A level and GCSE courses, as well as tuition in preparation for entry to mainstream schools, universities and a range of specialist institutions. The college also offers short-term and part-time courses to pupils wishing to supplement their full-time education programme. These are available throughout the year, including during holiday times. Self-employed tutors, drawn mainly from the academic community in Oxford, provide the tuition.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

This is a college where pupils, accommodated for short periods, are highly motivated in their education. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils enjoy the experience of meeting others from a range of backgrounds as well as embracing the British culture during their short stays.

Pupils enjoy their short stays in the United Kingdom. They are motivated in their learning, and their attendance at the college is excellent. Pupils speak positively of their host families and like the way in which the families accept them. A pupil said, 'They were an amazing host family. They made me feel as if I was at home. They offered me help whenever I needed it.'

Pupils are able to participate in activities in the local area, organised by the college or the host families. They explore the local area as well as other places of interest further afield. They experience home-cooked food with their host families, as well as a range of cuisine in various restaurants in the multi-cultural community. Pupils speak positively about the arrangements for food.

Host families provide internet access for the pupils in their home. Pupils say how much they appreciate this and how they are able to easily contact their overseas family members.

All staff make safeguarding a high priority for each pupil. They understand the risks and vulnerabilities, especially for pupils from overseas. Key staff have regular welfare meetings to ensure the ongoing well-being of pupils. Pupils enjoy positive and constructive relationships with the adults around them. They identify those individuals they can speak to about any concern. They have daily dialogue with staff in a relaxed format over lunch. Staff seek their views more formally too, for example about their home-stay accommodation.

A parent said, 'My child felt very happy and safe at the home-stay, and he was able to make his own way to school safely each day. He could easily contact us every day. In case of any concern, he spoke to his guardian and his host family.'

The quality of care and support

Good

The welfare officer obtains all necessary information as part of the admission process. She collates key information into a registration document and provides this to host families. This includes the arrangements for transport from the airport. Pupils are able to contact the college if there are any last-minute changes to the plan, such as a delayed flight. The document highlights any health needs. Pupils have access to a doctor in a local practice, if necessary. Host families provide over-the-counter medicines, confident that the necessary parental consent is in place.

Pupils generally arrive at a weekend so that they can get to know their host families and the local area. This includes planning a safe route to school, either walking or taking a short bus journey. Host families exchange phone numbers with pupils so that they can easily stay in touch. The welfare officer provides a pupil handbook. This guides pupils in the rules, protocols and expectations during their stay with their host families. Key staff at the college then provide an induction into the routines there.

Pupils enjoy a range of activities organised by the college or host families. They are able to visit museums or local parks or engage in sports, such as swimming or football. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to engage in British culture, celebrating key festivals.

Pupils enjoy a range of cuisine. Lunchtimes are a social occasion in the local community, when pupils can choose from a wide variety of different foods. They have evening meals with their host families and embrace British family life.

Pupils are easily able to contact their families, even if they are overseas. The host families provide access to a wifi connection. Pupils are able to use digital technology, such as video conferencing, to stay in touch. They speak highly of this arrangement.

All staff and host families are aware of the emotional well-being of the pupils in their care. They have regular conversations to ensure that pupils are feeling happy and relaxed. Pupils enjoy positive and mature relationships with those adults around them. They feel confident in the support and are able to focus on their studies. They can talk to various adults about any concern. Pupils who return for another short course, like to stay with the same host families.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Safeguarding practice is good. The principal is the designated safeguarding lead. His safeguarding role is explicit in his job description, in accordance with statutory guidance. He follows all the necessary protocols in the event of a concern. He keeps a clear written audit trail that outlines the decision-making process. He learns from events and effectively delegates any actions as a result. He is aware of any events in the community and gives serious deliberation to any potential impact on the pupils at the college. He recognises the need to update the college policy on safeguarding, to reflect the good practice of the college and the most recently published statutory guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education 2016'.

The principal engages with other safeguarding professionals when necessary. One such professional said, 'The school attends meetings regarding safeguarding that our team holds with tutorial and language colleges. They have taken appropriate advice when needed, in the past, regarding policy and procedure.'

The principal arranges an annual safeguarding update for host families. He uses pertinent questions to generate thought and discussion on current issues. Host families discuss their opinions on a variety of themes, such as sexting. The principal gives them a range of scenarios to which there is not always a straightforward answer. Host families are able to deliberate with each other and professionals on how to keep pupils safe.

The welfare officer has an excellent relationship with host families. They speak highly of

her support, guidance and availability. She ensures that host families have the necessary training. She has recognised the need to provide further training, especially in the area of e-safety, and has recently had further training herself to cascade to host families.

The welfare officer carefully assesses host family accommodation. She makes sure that the necessary health and safety checks are in place, such as fire safety and certification of the safety of gas boilers. Pupils live in warm and comfortable environments that are safe.

Staff know what to do in the event of a pupil going missing. Going missing from host families is not an issue. Host families have a clear process to follow in the event of a pupil not returning at the expected time. The welfare officer is re-writing the policy to reflect local police protocols and statutory guidance on children who go missing.

The principal adopts safer recruitment practice. He employs adults deemed to be suitable to work with children. Likewise, the welfare officer makes the necessary checks on host families before placing pupils with them.

The college tailors programmes, such as the personal, social, health and economic curriculum, to meet the changing cohort of pupils. Tutors teach pupils how to keep themselves safe at a level appropriate to their ages.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The principal provides strong and effective leadership. He has a good grasp of the national minimum standards for boarding. There is a culture of high expectations, and pupils respond positively to this. The welfare officer ensures that pupils are well cared for and can focus on their education.

The principal has clear plans for improvement, such as identifying the training needs of key staff. Staff are motivated to meet the needs of the pupils. They demonstrate a commitment to them, such as making themselves available after hours when a pupil asks for advice or guidance.

The proprietor is a regular visitor to the college. He holds the principal to account and acts as a critical friend. Currently, there are no written records of his oversight of the effectiveness of the leadership and management. There is no immediate negative impact on pupils.

The welfare officer monitors the quality of the host family accommodation at least annually. Host families welcome the visits, and there is a transparent relationship between the host families and the college. Any issues that arise, of which there are few, are resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of all parties.

The welfare officer seeks the views of pupils on the quality of the host family accommodation and their experience there. She collates the data and uses it intelligently to place pupils with relevant families and to provide continuous monitoring of pupils' care. This includes routine monitoring of anyone in the family who is turning 16 years of age, so a Disclosure and Barring Service check can be made in accordance with the national minimum standards. Pupils can access the formal complaints procedure if necessary. However, the close contact and communication means that any issues are

resolved quickly without the need to resort to the formal complaints process.

As there is no boarding accommodation, other than host families, there is not a boarding staff team. The welfare officer demonstrates competence and efficiency in taking care of all the host family arrangements.

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 exceed the standard of good and result in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding, and the impact that the boarding/residential provision has had on 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's 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 that children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	138602
Social care unique reference number	1159262
DfE registration number	931/6014

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.

Type of school	Boarding school
Number of boarders on roll	Four
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 21
Headteacher	Mr Rupert Alesbury
Date of previous boarding inspection	n/a
Telephone number	01865 200676
Email address	enquiries@carfax-oxford.com

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