

Kings Oxford

St Joseph's Hall, Temple Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX4 2UJ

Inspection dates

05/10/2016 to 07/10/2016

The overall experiences and progress of students and young people

Good **2**

The quality of care and support

Good 2

How well students and young people are protected

Requires improvement 3

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good 2

Summary of key findings

The boarding provision is good because

- The new principal is bringing about positive change. He has identified the strengths and weaknesses with clear development plans to bring about improvement.
- Students demonstrate a mature attitude to their education. They make good progress and go on to university or other educational institutions.
- Students enjoy positive and trusting relationships with staff. Although they are far from home, they say that they do not feel lonely. They identify adults around them whom they can talk to about any issues.
- Arrangements for health are good. Students are able to get the routine health treatment they need, including vaccinations.
- Staff have a high expectation of behaviour, and empower students to be as independent as possible. Students respond well to this approach and conduct their lives in a mature way. Behaviour is extremely good.
- Key staff with responsibility for safeguarding work well with other professionals to follow due process in the event of a concern. They challenge others to do the same and persist in that challenge until the matter is brought to a satisfactory conclusion.
- Solid arrangements to support and monitor the homestay arrangements are effective. Host families report good communication with the school.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

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

- 5.7 Boarding accommodation is reserved for the use of those students designated to use it, and is protected from access by unauthorised persons. Any use of school facilities by individuals or groups does not allow members of the public (including members of organised groups using school facilities) substantial and unsupervised access to students, or to boarding accommodation while occupied by students.
- 14.1 Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review the effectiveness and arrangements for the independent listener.
- Expand the missing person policy to define clearly responsibilities and timescales for action in the event of a missing person episode.
- Ensure that homestay families have training in e-safety and are confident in the issues around keeping students safe in the cyber world.
- Document formal staff supervision.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection with notice of one hour. Inspection activities included: observation and discussion with staff and students at the boarding accommodation over two evenings, visits to several homestay families, sharing mealtimes, discussions with the principal and other members of the senior management team. The welfare and accommodation officer was consulted as well as other key staff. Contact was made with the local statutory safeguarding authority. A wide range of documentation concerning boarding was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Keith Riley	Lead social care inspector
Melissa McMillan	Social care inspector
Chris Peel	Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Kings Oxford is part of the Kings Education group, which runs international colleges in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The aim of the school is to help students prepare for attending universities in the United Kingdom and America. Courses for these students and a small number of GCSE students are provided at the college's St Joseph's campus and St Michael's campus. The college is registered to accept up to 370 students aged from 15 upwards. The students attending the college are from a wide range of countries around the world. The education provision was inspected by Ofsted in May 2016 and judged as good in all areas.

Students are accommodated in the residential facility (Wavy Gate), with homestay families or through private fostering arrangements. The residential facility is within walking distance of the school or a short bus journey. Students over 18 years old may be accommodated in the same block in the facility, but not the same wing. Male and female students occupy different floors. Another international college, inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate, accommodates students in a separate building on the same site. There is a shared common room in a building separate from all sleeping accommodation.

At the time of the inspection, there were 51 boarders ranging in age from 16 to 18 years and 82 boarders in total. No students were accommodated in private fostering arrangements. This was the first welfare inspection since registration.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of students and young people

Good

Staff are successful in meeting the aims of the statement of principles. Students leave the school as confident young adults. They go on to university or other educational establishments.

Students demonstrate a mature attitude to each other and the adults around them. They are determined to make a success of their lives and have high aspirations for the future. They are motivated in their learning and their behaviour reflects their desire to fulfil their potential. Students are responsible members of the Oxfordshire community and beyond. For example, they bake cakes for a coffee morning to support and raise funds for their main international charity, for whom the school has already built two schools in Cambodia. In addition, they raise funds for the local children's hospice.

Students say that they do not feel lonely. They enjoy regular contact with their families and others who are important to them. They use technology, such as video conferencing, to stay in touch. They have a wide friendship group within the school and enjoy learning about other cultures. This is a school where diversity is celebrated.

Students say that they feel safe and secure. Those accommodated at Wavy Gate particularly like the final night-time check to ensure that they feel alright and ready to settle for the night. Students are reassured of their safety as the night security staff member makes regular checks inside the building.

Students demonstrate a mature and responsible attitude to their independence. They enjoy organising their own weekend activities in the home, in the local community or in travelling to a large city. Students develop their cooking skills by using the facilities within the kitchen in each wing of the accommodation at Wavy Gate. Such opportunities prepare them for life after school.

Students benefit from a wide range of healthy food choices provided by the catering team. Meals are nutritious and of good quality. Mealtimes are social occasions where students enjoy each other's company across the age ranges. A real sense of the school community is being developed by naturally occurring activities which bring students together.

The quality of care and support

Good

Staff demonstrate a sensitive and thoughtful approach towards the students. Relationships are warm and nurturing. Students say that staff treat them with respect and dignity, and it is an inclusive environment that successfully encompasses many different cultures and religions. Students make friends with a wide range of others from various backgrounds.

Students take good care of their health. They take responsibility, for example in self-

medicating if necessary. They seek the support of staff to help them make health appointments. Staff put health plans into place if necessary. They have developed a good relationship with a local surgery, so students can see a general practitioner if they are unwell. One student was able to get the necessary vaccinations due to the staff supporting him to make his needs known. Staff inform host families of any relevant health needs. They ensure that any necessary protocols and consents are in place, such as the action to be taken in the event of an epileptic seizure.

The catering manager ensures that there is a range of healthy meals available. Students enjoy a range of international cuisine. They are able to choose particular meals on special occasions that are important to their country. All students are able to experience and celebrate other cultures. Staff are well versed in the wide range of cultural needs in the school. They are able to signpost students to places and events, such as a place of worship for a key religious festival.

Staff give students opportunities to give formal feedback through questionnaires and the school council. Staff analyse the trends and assess individual issues, taking appropriate actions where necessary. Students speak extremely positively about the informal opportunities to talk to the adults around them. They identify key people who they feel particularly comfortable with to discuss any issues. One student said, 'I can talk to (name of staff member) about anything and he will get it sorted.' Students also have access to an independent listener. However, their induction pack does not include her details and no current student is making use of this arrangement.

Students speak well of their host families and their accommodation. One student said, 'They treat me like their son.' Students give formal feedback by completing termly questionnaires, for which there are high satisfaction rates. The accommodation officer makes an annual visit to the host families and assesses the premises. Host families say that there is easy access to the accommodation officer and, if they raise concerns, the officer has acted quickly to resolve them.

Wavy Gate offers a high standard of accommodation. The building is custom-built with the latest fire protection equipment. Each student has a room with en suite facilities. The decor and furnishings are of a high standard. Students value the effort that staff put in to maintain the environment in conjunction with the building owner. One student said, 'Wavy Gate is great.'

How well students and young people are protected

Requires improvement

Students' behaviour is excellent. Trophies for good conduct, combined with a culture of treating students as young adults mean that staff have little need to use the ladder of sanctions as a tool to correct poor behaviour. Staff are trained in using physical restraint but have not needed to use this level of intervention. The senior management team is considering a 'no restraint policy' as a result.

Students under 18 occupy the same building as students over 18. Although they are on separate wings, the security arrangements require improvement. Students under 18 do

not routinely lock the door to their wing and there are no arrangements to prevent access to the studio flats. The senior management team has recognised that adult students could potentially access the under 18 accommodation as a result. Quotes to install a key-fob system on internal access doors to each wing have been obtained. In the meantime, night-time checks have been tightened. Previous practice for the monitoring of visitors lacked rigour. Students who turned 18 while in the under-18 boarding accommodation were allowed visitors after the under-18 curfew. The new principal recognises the potential vulnerabilities of this arrangement. He has introduced a new protocol, whereby students who turn 18 while in the young people's wing abide by the same rules as those who are under 18. They are no longer allowed visitors after hours.

Staff undergo safer recruitment training. The vast majority of job applicants have their employment history checked. However, in a minority of cases the interviewer did not record explanations for gaps in employment. Staff record the dates on the single central register on which the vetting checks were completed but they do not record the dates of other checks. This does not present significant risks, but such practice is not in strict accordance with the recently amended statutory guidance ('Keeping students safe in education', September 2016).

Local Safeguarding Students Board representatives train staff in safeguarding. Staff show a good knowledge of practice and are alert to any concerns, including any vulnerability to radicalisation, sexual exploitation or female genital mutilation. They know what to do and who to go to in the event of a concern. No such concerns have arisen since the school's opening.

Missing from school is not an issue at this school. Students are extremely motivated to engage in their learning and prove their mature attitude to independence as they prepare for university. They complete 'going away sheets' when they are going to be absent, for example going to stay with their family in a nearby hotel. Staff do have a policy to follow in the event of a missing person episode. This lacks clarity as to who takes responsibility and the timescales. For example, identifying who will search the surrounding area and when to contact the police. The policy does not refer to the local police protocol on absence versus missing. Staff do not have key information readily available to send to the police in the event of an episode of missing. There has been one misunderstanding as to the whereabouts of a student since registration, who later returned safely. Staff followed protocols but did not keep a detailed chronology of the action they took.

Named staff ensure that host families have training in safeguarding. They show a good awareness of safeguarding and know whom to contact if they have a concern, including after hours if necessary. Some host families have not had recent training in e-safety. The school has not assured itself of the proficiency of host families in understanding the risks in the cyber world. Rules that apply in the school for safeguarding reasons, such as access to a student's electronic device, are not clear for host families.

Students live in a safe physical environment. A detailed health and safety policy underpins practice. All necessary checks are carried out, including in host family accommodation, to ensure the ongoing welfare of students.

Students are kept safe at night. A security guard patrols the grounds and makes regular checks inside the building. As a result of a previous incident, he ensures that the 'visitor sign in' procedure is being followed. He is aware of those students who are under 18 and the procedure to follow if they want to leave the site after their curfew. All staff demonstrate a strong focus on safeguarding the under 18s in recognition of their 'child' status.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

A qualified, experienced and active group of directors and senior managers oversee all school practice. They are regular visitors to the school, they mingle with the students and staff, and they provide regular scrutiny and monitoring. The senior leadership team welcomes their critical friends, and they respond positively to the constructive criticism and challenge. Students live in an environment where there is a desire for continual improvement.

The directors have recently appointed a new principal. Staff enjoy his management style and respond well to his leadership. They warmly embrace change as they accept the need for continuous self-reflection and improvement. The principal ensures that managers monitor compliance with policy and the national minimum standards for boarding schools. He draws up an action plan to address immediate issues and a plan for strategic development. He had already identified the vulnerability in some security measures, confirmed during the inspection, and has clear plans to improve systems. He has obtained quotes and booked appointments with contractors and the owner of the building to discuss the timeframe for the security improvements, in line with the changing cohort of students. He recognises the need to consider fully the different needs of students as determined by their age.

The principal is a role model and a stimulus for promoting first class care. He has brought about systematic improvement in other areas, such as the personal, social and health education programme. He brings in various expert speakers to teach students about a range of issues, including bullying, alcohol, sexual health and staying safe online. Students are being well educated to develop as responsible members of society. They know how to keep themselves safe in the wider world. The principal puts the individual needs of students at the centre of practice, for example by providing staff training in working with students with dyslexia and those who do not have English as their first language.

Care staff speak highly of their senior leadership team. They describe how they are an inspiration to them and the students, for all to achieve their maximum potential. Staff are motivated and dedicated to meet all the individual needs of the students they care for. They can discuss any issues in supervision as well as in the day-to-day interaction with their line manager. The manager exchanges outcomes from supervision in ad-hoc email communication. He does not formally document the supervision at least termly. This omission inhibits the school's ability to measure staff's continual professional development effectively.

Other staff are responsible for the robust admissions process. They ensure that the necessary visas are in place, undertake assessments and identify suitable accommodation. Students follow a simple itinerary once they arrive in the country to get them safely to their host family or the on-site boarding provision. Students are then involved in an induction programme to familiarise them with the school and surrounding area, which helps them to settle.

Key staff oversee the arrangements for host families. They ensure that all the necessary checks are in place and visit regularly. They seek students' views every term on their placement with a host family. Host families speak in the most positive terms about the school. They recommend the arrangement to others. They have access to immediate support and advice, even if this is out of hours. A member of a host family said, 'Communication with the school is fantastic.'

This school is in the hands of competent leaders who are embedding good practice by having high expectations.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of students 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 students and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by students 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. Students 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 students and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of students and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean students 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

Unique reference number	138602
Social care unique reference number	1159262
DfE registration number	931/6010

This inspection was carried out under the Students 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	51 (16-18)
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	16 to 33
Principal	Mr Mike Smith
Date of previous boarding inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01865 711 829
Email address	oxford@kingseducation.com

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