

Kings London

United Language Schools Ltd

25 Beckenham Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4PR

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Kings London is part of Kings Education which runs international colleges in the United Kingdom and United States of America. Students come from all over the world and undertake a range of academic and English language courses. Young people under the age of 18 stay with host families during their studies. There are currently 233 students on roll and 44 of these are under 18 and staying with host families. Included in this number are four young people under the age of 16.

Inspection dates: 31 October to 2 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

This boarding school is good because:

- Young people enjoy positive relationships and a high standard of care in their host families.
- Young people are safe as a result of the attention and care they receive in school

and in the host families.

- There is an excellent range of positive activities for young people to enjoy.
- Young people get on well together, they support each other and treat each other with respect and kindness.
- The school promotes a positive culture of inclusiveness and learning in a multicultural environment.
- The leaders and managers of the school work effectively as a team. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and continuously strive to improve the service.
- The school boarding provision meets all of the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people have a very positive experience of living with their host families. They give a consistent message of feeling safe, cared for, and included in family life. One young person described how his host 'parent' looked after him 'like a mother'. He went on to say that she spent time talking to him and that this helped him a lot when he felt homesick. Another young person said (of his host family), 'I have a super family,' and 'I especially like talking with them at the dinner table.' Another student described how she 'loved everything' about her host family. She also described how much she enjoyed playing with the host family's children. Another young person appreciated the help and support she receives from her host family; in particular, she felt that they helped her with her studies.

Young people presented a consistent message of feeling welcome and being included in their host's family life. They described the benefits of spending time with native English speakers and felt that this significantly improved their language skills.

Young people benefit greatly from their boarding experience. They gain confidence as a result of living away from home and improve their independence skills. The school promotes a strong culture of community within the setting. It organises a wide range of events, activities and trips to suit all interests. This creates an inclusive environment where all students are encouraged to mix and integrate. One student remarked that because all of the students are in the same situation, it encourages her to try new things and share new experiences.

The school has an excellent induction process to welcome new students into the school. Teachers quickly take students 'under their wing' and organise a range of events designed to provide them with information, guidance and support. Students benefit from a clear structure and the school seeks regular feedback from them to ensure that they are thriving and making progress.

The school pays careful attention to matching students with the right host family. This means that the vast majority of them settle in quickly and feel at home. On the rare occasion that this is not the case, the school is responsive and acts quickly to resolve any problems or, if necessary, find a better match. Host families talk positively about the support they receive from the school. One host 'mother' observed that, in her experience, the school always prioritises the needs and welfare of young people.

Host families provide genuine nurture and care. They demonstrate empathy and understanding in relation to the challenges that young people face as a result of living abroad and away from their families. They present a consistent message that they treat the young people 'as their own'. One host parent described how, if students are ill, she 'tucks them up in bed with a hot water bottle'.

Host families provide clear structure and boundaries for the young people in their care. They promote healthy routines and this ensures that young people arrive at school on time and well prepared for study. Young people comment positively about the food on offer. The physical environment provided by host families is of a high standard.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people are safe. The school ensures that all host families are thoroughly checked and vetted to ensure that they are suitable. These checks are regularly updated. Similarly, all staff responsible for the welfare of young people in boarding are subject to checks in line with safe recruitment practice.

The school has a dedicated welfare team that undertakes visits to host families and provides support where this is needed. The welfare team undertakes health and safety checks to ensure that young people are not exposed to avoidable hazards. The school premises is managed and maintained by a dedicated member of staff. He regularly inspects and monitors the school buildings to ensure that students are safe. Record-keeping in respect of health and safety and fire safety are maintained to a high standard.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. They know the young people well and react quickly to any concerns in regard to their health and well-being. All young people have access to medical treatment if they need it. The school seeks health information from parents prior to admission and provides appropriate support to manage any known health issues. If students are ill, host families and school staff ensure that they are properly supervised and cared for.

All host families undertake safeguarding training to ensure that they are alert to risks and dangers that the young people may face. Host families know how to respond to concerns and have an emergency number so that they can contact staff for advice at all times. The school and welfare team have designated staff to lead on

safeguarding. These staff undergo regular, advanced safeguarding training. This includes training in relation to risks of exploitation, radicalisation and trafficking. This ensures that they respond promptly and appropriately to any concerns. They share information and work effectively in partnership with local safeguarding agencies.

The school and host families are alert to the potential risks to young people presented by the use of the internet and social media. They have appropriate filtering systems in place to restrict internet access. They also recognise that it is difficult to restrict young people's access to the internet through mobile devices. They provide focused support and learning to help young people understand the dangers and to take steps to protect themselves online. Staff and host families undertake training to help them monitor and educate young people about these risks.

The care and nurture offered by host families constitute a significant protective factor. They act as a good parent would in response to any worries or concerns. They know the young people well and know where they are at all times. If young people are not where they are supposed to be, host families and the school staff are proactive and contact young people to ensure that they are safe.

The school and host families are aware of the links between poor school attendance and child protection concerns. They monitor attendance closely and take prompt action to investigate if young people are not in school. Young people seldom go missing and the school has clear procedures in place to respond if young people are absent or if their whereabouts are unknown.

Young people are generally very well behaved. Host families are clear in their expectations and boundaries. They take a positive approach to managing behaviour and provide support and guidance where this is needed. Sanctions are seldom used and there have been no occasions where physical interventions have been necessary.

Young people know how to raise concerns and have access to independent advice and support if they need it. The school uses a range of mechanisms to gather the views of young people and it uses this information to inform service development. The school responds promptly to complaints and has clear procedures in place to ensure that concerns are properly investigated and resolved.

Young people report feeling safe in the school and in their host families. Staff and host families keep a close eye on young people but are not overly restrictive when, for example, agreeing curfew times. One student commented that host families 'respect the fact that we are old enough to make decisions but they also understand that we are teenagers and give us the support we need to stay safe'. Young people reported that they get on well with each other and that there were no incidents of bullying.

The leadership and management of the school and boarding create and maintain a

strong focus on safeguarding. A senior staff member has a dedicated quality assurance role and ensures that systems are in place to monitor safeguarding practice. It was reassuring that, during this inspection, all potential vulnerabilities in relation to safeguarding identified by inspectors were already known to the school. Leaders take prompt remedial action in response to concerns and strengthen practice where this is necessary.

The safeguarding policies of the school and the guidance given to host families are clear, current and relevant. These policies are frequently updated and monitored to ensure that they are put into practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The school has faced significant recent challenges in that key senior school and welfare staff have moved on or been absent. The governing body of the school has taken steps to manage this situation well and ensure that the quality of care and protection provided to young people has not suffered. This is, in part due to excellent quality assurance systems, a clear child focus and a drive to maintain high standards through effective service development.

Leaders embrace a whole-school approach to promoting the progress and welfare of pupils and boarders. There are clear and consistent lines of communication to the leadership team from teachers and host families. Senior staff are closely involved and well informed of the day-to-day welfare of young people. They know the young people well and prioritise their well-being. This creates a strong sense that young people are helped and supported at all times. Problems are spotted at an early stage and prompt action is taken to ensure that they receive the guidance and support they need to thrive.

Leaders and managers ensure that host families receive the training and support that they need in order to provide high standards of care for young people. They provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities and this encourages young people to mix, have fun and learn from new experiences.

This is a welfare-only inspection and it is therefore not possible to comment on the extent that young people make progress in education. It was noticeable, however, that young people have a positive attitude to learning and the care provided in host families is conducive to supporting their education.

The boarding provision has a detailed statement of its aims and objectives. This clearly describes how staff care for young people, support their progress and keep them safe. The welfare team regularly seeks the views of young people to ensure that the stated aims of the service are delivered in practice and that the staff are making a positive difference to the lives of young people.

Leaders and managers in the school have a clear vision and a strong drive to promote continuous improvement. They have an ambitious and realistic service

development plan that is frequently updated and put into practice. Leaders lead with intelligence, insight and integrity. It is notable that host families, welfare staff and teachers comment positively about and are actively engaged with the child-centred ethos of the school and boarding. Staff report that the leaders and managers of the school are visible and provide appropriate support and guidance.

The fact that the young people come from such a wide range of cultural backgrounds presents both opportunity and challenge in relation to promoting diversity. The school is alive to this and encourages young people to learn and develop a keen understanding in relation to respecting difference. They challenge negative attitudes and promote a collective sense of community within both the school environment and host family life. Young people appreciate the benefits of living in a multicultural environment and a parent commented that he was 'very grateful for teaching' and that his child benefited from being able to 'coexist with students from other parts of the world'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They visited a number of host families and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. They talked to children and young people. Only one parent responded to Parent View and, given the range of languages spoken and the fact that parents were abroad, it was not practical to ascertain their views through conversation. Inspectors viewed the recruitment record for host families and for staff involved in the welfare team. The inspectors viewed records and interviewed key staff in order to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Boarding school details

Social care unique reference number: 1159264

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Simon Cleary

Type of school: Boarding School

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Inspectors

Lee Kirwin: social care inspector

Jacqueline Graves: social care inspector



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