

Abbey College in Malvern

253 Wells Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 4JF

Inspection dates

14–16 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The proprietor, leaders and managers have not ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools. This negatively affects pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Safeguarding processes do not meet statutory requirements. Processes for reporting concerns are unclear and staff are not sufficiently trained in some key areas. The school has failed to carry out sufficient checks on staff prior to them commencing employment.
- A few staff do not implement the school's assessment policy consistently. Consequently, pupils' mistakes and misconceptions are not identified quickly enough in a small minority of subjects.
- Leaders have not addressed pupils' concerns about the condition of the premises. Pupils say that some classrooms are cold. Some external areas and walkways are poorly lit and slippery.
- While pupils know how to keep themselves safe online, they are less clear on the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use information from previous schools to plan lessons that meet pupils' needs appropriately.
- Pupils' behaviour is good because of staff's high expectations. Pupils arrive on time and are well prepared for lessons. Their positive attitudes contribute to their academic achievements.
- The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum prepares pupils well for their next phases of education or employment.
- The school has improved pupils' cultural experiences. Pupils learn about different experiences, customs and lifestyles.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. The majority of pupils make strong progress from their starting points. The vast majority of pupils achieved their expected GCSE and A-level results. All pupils who left the school last year moved on to higher and further education.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the national minimum standards for boarding/residential special and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that action is taken to meet the statutory requirements for safeguarding by making sure that:
 - all designated safeguarding leads understand exactly what they need to do to keep pupils safe
 - all staff receive appropriate training to recognise safeguarding concerns, in particular child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation
 - all staff understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities
 - leaders complete all the required checks on all staff's suitability to work with children prior to them working with young people
 - leaders accurately record the checks made on staff's suitability to work with children on the school's single central record so that it complies with current government guidance
 - all pupils understand the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - action is taken to meet the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools
 - the proprietor and governors check that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented consistently and that they take prompt suitable action when they are not.
- Establish a consistent approach to the assessment of pupils' work by making sure that:
 - all staff implement the school's assessment policy consistently
 - pupils' mistakes and misconceptions are quickly identified and corrected in all subjects.
- Ensure full compliance with the following regulations:
 - The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b))
 - The proprietor ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges. (paragraphs 8, 8(a), 8(b))
 - The proprietor ensures that appropriate checks are carried out to confirm in respect of each such person the person's identity; the person's medical fitness; the person's right to work in the United Kingdom; and where appropriate, the person's qualifications; the proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced

criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment; in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of boarders, in addition to the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (f), the proprietor checks that Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, is complied with, and in the light of the information from the checks referred to in paragraphs (c) to (f) the proprietor considers that the person is suitable for the position to which the person is appointed. (paragraphs 18, 18(2), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f))

- The proprietor must ensure that checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) are completed before a person's appointment (paragraph 18(3))
- The proprietor must ensure that a check was made to establish whether staff are subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed. (paragraphs 21(3), 21(3)(b))
- The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. (paragraph 25)
- The proprietor must ensure that external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises. (paragraphs 27, 27(b))
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently. (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a))
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently. (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b))
- The proprietor must ensure that those with responsibilities for leadership and management actively promote the well-being of pupils. (paragraph 34 (1)(c))
- The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:
 - All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the boarders to whom they are prescribed. Boarders allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so. (NMS 3.4)
 - The school ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (ISS paragraph 7–7(b)) (NMS11.1)

- The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. (ISS paragraph 25) (NMS 6.2)
- 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. (NMS 13.1)
- Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders are appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders with restricted mobility. (NMS 5.4)
- 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. (ISS paragraphs 18(2)–21(7)(b)) (NMS 14.1)
- The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number, training and experience for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved. (NMS 15.3)

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding/residential provision	Inadequate
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the boarding/residential provision	Inadequate

- Leaders and managers have not ensured that the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding are met. Some of these unmet standards have a negative effect on pupils' welfare. As a result, safeguarding is ineffective. The staff responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements are unclear on how to report concerns. Insufficient checks on staff's suitability to work with children have been made on staff working directly with young people. In addition, leaders' checks on host families with whom some of the young people have lived when suspended from the school site have been insufficient. The school's arrangements for recruiting host families to look after pupils do not ensure that all the proper suitability checks are carried out, which creates a risk.
- Although staff have had basic training in safeguarding, senior staff are not fully aware of the role of key safeguarding personnel and are not clear about reporting processes.
- Staff training includes a range of mandatory courses. This does not include some key courses including child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. However, staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the 'Prevent' duty.
- The school's medication administration arrangements are inadequate and put young people at risk. Records of when medicines have been given are weak. Staff inadequately assess young people who administer their own medication. Some young people have been given permission to take medication despite staff not being aware of what it is.
- There is a policy and a procedure regarding young people who go missing. Records of these do not clearly show a chronology of events.
- The school's residential staff team are largely new to their roles. There is an induction programme in place and staff are keen to develop their practice and support the young people. Staff support one another although there is not currently an organised system of supervision for staff.
- Systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning are effective. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's provision and know where improvements need to be made. There is a newly appointed leadership team, which has a comprehensive understanding of the school. Middle leaders have worked successfully to improve the quality of teaching and learning through their rigorous monitoring of lessons. However, a few teachers do not implement the school's policy for assessment and feedback consistently. As a result, pupils' mistakes and misconceptions are not identified quickly enough in a small minority of subjects. In lessons where feedback is informative and focused on improvements, there is evidence of pupils making good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils enjoy being at the school and are positive about the relationships they have built up with their peers and the teaching staff. Appropriate systems are in place to listen and

respond to young people's views and any complaints they raise. The school has a high number of staff who speak foreign languages including French, Italian, Spanish, German, Russian, Mandarin, Polish, Farsi, Bulgarian, Greek and Portuguese. As a result, teachers are able to support pupils who need additional help with improving their fluency in using the English language. This is also helpful if pupils have particular concerns or questions that they need to discuss in their home language.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Since the last inspection, leaders have worked to develop pupils' cultural experiences effectively. Pupils have opportunities to work with peers from other countries when they have to prepare and deliver a presentation on their own country's customs and culture. Pupils enjoy this experience and say it has helped them to learn about one another. They enjoy a range of activities and enjoy getting to know individuals from other cultures. One young person stated that, 'it feels like we are one large family living together'. Some pupils talk about their countries with children from local primary schools. Abbey College pupils say this experience was 'very enjoyable'. This approach supports pupils' development in using the English language both during the school day and in evening activities.
- Pupils engage well in citizenship lessons and their understanding of fundamental British values is good. For example, they know right from wrong, demonstrate an acceptance of, and respect for, others' beliefs and values and can talk confidently about English law and British institutions. Young people respect each other and have no concerns about bullying. Behaviour management systems are appropriate.

Governance

- The school's governing body fails to show that it checks the effectiveness of the boarding provision and that it takes the necessary action to rectify concerns quickly and appropriately.
- Governors do not routinely scrutinise and check the school's work to keep pupils safe. For example, the proprietor and governors have not checked the school's processes for safer recruitment. Insufficient checks have been carried out on some members of staff prior to them starting at the school.
- Governors have not ensured that all of the independent school standards or the national minimum standards for boarding are met in full. They have not taken appropriate action when standards have not been met. For example, they have not ensured that classrooms and young people's bedrooms are heated properly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The single central register of checks on staff's suitability to work with children does not meet requirements. At the time of this inspection, checks on whether teaching staff were subject to any prohibition notices had not been carried out. An external company carries out these checks. Leaders were unclear on how these were carried out and what information was checked. These checks were made during inspection and it was confirmed that no staff were subject to prohibition notices.
- The college has published a comprehensive safeguarding policy and all staff have completed core training in child protection and in identifying neglect and abuse. Staff,

however, lack training in other key areas of safeguarding. The processes for reporting concerns and disclosures are unclear.

- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe online. They know about the risks associated with cyber-bullying and computer viruses. Pupils are not as well informed about the risks of radicalisation and extremism. The school has completed some work on these matters in assemblies. However, further work is needed to ensure that pupils are fully aware of the risks.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They say they have not witnessed any bullying and are confident that staff would resolve problems should any occur. Pupils say that staff are friendly and they can talk to them about any problems they have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning are good. Since the previous inspection, staff have developed the curriculum appropriately. As a result, pupils can study humanities, economics, business studies, citizenship and art alongside English and mathematics. The school offers a range of GCSE and A-level courses. For example, the curriculum includes foundation courses in business studies, sciences and medicine. Pupils enjoy school and say that they have made good progress. The majority of pupils know what they are working towards and what they need to do to improve.
- Leaders extend the formal curriculum well with a wide range of extracurricular activities such as sport, art, music, drama and visits to places of cultural interest. Pupils say that they value the opportunity to participate in these activities.
- Staff gather and use information from a pupils' previous school to identify their prior knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. This involves liaison with the previous schools to gather relevant information. Leaders assess pupils' language and communication skills through Skype interviews. Pupils complete a number of tests to assess their knowledge, understanding and aptitudes. Teachers use this information effectively to plan and deliver lesson activities that match pupils' needs and abilities.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they use highly effective questioning to deepen pupils' understanding and to promote high-level thinking. Pupils' answers show that they have made good progress and can recall and apply previous learning. Pupils engage well in their lessons. They are keen to learn new skills and they respond well to adults' requests. Pupils' questions are relevant and show that they want to learn more.
- The teaching of English is good. Staff develop pupils' communication and language skills well throughout the curriculum. Teachers plan the teaching of English well and take into account the range of different languages pupils speak. The work in pupils' books shows a vast improvement in written English over time, with examples of writing, which has increased in depth, fluency and sophistication. Teachers give pupils numerous opportunities to practise their language skills across the curriculum and to learn from their mistakes and misconceptions. As a result, pupils make rapid gains in developing their use of the English language.
- In mathematics, teachers use information from pupils' previous schools to plan highly stimulating lessons. Staff engage pupils well through challenging tasks and problem-solving activities. Pupils recall previous learning to solve difficult tasks. They say the work

is hard and that it makes them think. Teachers are highly skilled and use their subject knowledge well to reshape tasks when necessary.

- In science, pupils are engaged well in practical and theoretical activities. The laboratories are well resourced and staff follow safe working practices. Pupils are able to talk about complex chemical reactions and explain the processes they have followed. They approach practical experiments with awe and wonder. Pupils are able to explain their results with confidence.
- Pupils engage well in daily tutorial sessions, which enable them to catch up on studies, to revise or to raise any concerns they may have. Teachers use this time to review pupils' academic progress.
- Pupils engage fully in their homework, which they complete with pride to a high standard. Pupils say homework helps them to learn and to practise their skills.
- Teachers have set high expectations and have established clear routines. Pupils arrive on time and settle quickly into learning. Teachers use time in lessons productively and no time is wasted. Pupils remain focused throughout their tasks because of teachers' careful planning to meet their needs.
- A few teachers do not apply the school's assessment and feedback policy consistently. As a result, teachers do not identify pupils' mistakes and misconceptions quickly enough in a small minority of subjects. Leaders are addressing this issue. However, it is too early to see the effects of this intervention.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Staff have not received enough training to ensure that they understand fully how to keep pupils safe. Leaders do not check staff's suitability to work with young people sufficiently.
- Some areas of the site are poorly lit. Leaders have purchased additional lighting to rectify this. However, at the point of inspection some walkways to and from classes were insufficiently lit. Some walkways around the site are slippery due to a build-up of moss and leaves.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Pupils say that they like the staff and that staff help and support them. For example, pupils say that leaders help them to identify suitable further and higher education courses and support them with the application process, visits to educational establishments and in preparing their personal statements.
- Pupils say that the classrooms are cold and that leaders have not responded to their concerns. They say that, because the school's policy states they cannot wear coats in classes, they are often cold in lessons.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have set high standards around behaviour and conduct and, as a result, pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils treat one another with respect. They value other people's ideas and opinions and have positive relationships with adults. They speak highly of staff and say that staff are always available to help and support them. Pupils' behaviour is consistently positive, both within lessons and during unstructured times.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They welcome visitors and engage in appropriate conversation. During the inspection, no derogatory or offensive language was heard and pupils said that this was typical. Pupils say incidents of negative behaviour are extremely rare. Pupils say that staff do not tolerate bullying. Pupils are confident that staff would deal with, and resolve, bullying incidents quickly. Pupils say that behaviour is good and that it has improved this year.
- The PSHE education curriculum provides pupils with positive experiences and meets their needs. Leaders plan the curriculum with pupils' varied backgrounds in mind. The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about friendships and relationships, right from wrong, careers education and budgeting.
- Pupils take pride in their work, their environment and their appearance. They arrive on time for learning and have the correct equipment. They are well prepared for lessons. Their positive attitudes to learning have a positive impact upon their progress.
- Attendance levels are high. Pupils value their education and attend school regularly. Their positive attitude towards their learning contributes to their successful outcomes. No pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.
- Pupils value the support and guidance they get from staff and say this helps them when making decisions about their plans.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils are good.
- For all pupils, English is an additional language. Staff develop pupils' English reading, writing, speaking and listening skills throughout the curriculum effectively. Staff achieve this through carefully planned teaching and focused intervention. In some cases, pupils have been able to make accelerated progress.
- Staff are highly skilled at developing pupils' vocabulary and grammar in different subjects. As a result, pupils make good progress in English and develop good communication skills. They say that their English speaking has improved since they arrived. This high focus on language development has had a positive impact on their achievement in all subject areas.
- Pupils read widely and often. They enjoy using the library and say that they enjoy reading for pleasure. Reading aloud is promoted well throughout the curriculum and pupils are regularly encouraged to participate in reading activities. Pupils' reading fluency and comprehension improves over time, resulting in pupils reading texts appropriate to their age and beyond.

- Information for the previous academic year shows that the majority of pupils achieved their expected GCSE and A-level results across a range of subjects. For some pupils this represents significant progress from their initial starting points and is broadly in line with national figures.
- Staff prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education or employment and training. Pupils who left during the previous academic year all progressed to universities or colleges of further education.
- The school's records show that the majority of current pupils are on track to achieve their expected targets across the curriculum. Where pupils are falling behind, teachers intervene quickly to provide additional support and to reshape tasks to enable them to catch up. As a result, across almost all year groups and in a wide range of subjects including English and mathematics, current pupils make consistently strong progress from their starting points. The work in pupils' books reflects this rate of progress. For the vast majority of pupils, the work in their books shows that they have made good progress over time.

Sixth form provision

Good

- The provision for students in the sixth form is good.
- The sixth-form curriculum provides a wide range of examination subjects that meet the students' needs and aptitudes successfully. Leaders have improved the provision by extending the opportunities available to students to complete university foundation courses and additional A-level courses. As a result, the vast majority of students achieve relevant qualifications and secure places at their first choice university or college of further education.
- All students participate in after-school preparation and study time. In this time, students develop their study skills and improve their literacy and numeracy skills effectively. As a result, students' mathematical, reading, writing and communication skills develop well.
- Students have suitable opportunities to improve their employability and independent living skills. For example, students participate in cooking classes, English language tuition classes and classes to improve skills in problem-solving and decision-making.
- Students receive effective careers information, advice, guidance and support. Staff have developed effective partnerships with universities and further education colleges so that students are fully aware of what to expect when they begin their studies in further or higher education.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding/residential provision

Inadequate

- The boarding provision does not offer a consistent level of accommodation for all students. Some enjoy pleasant, warm and well-lit bedrooms, while the majority experience badly maintained rooms that are poorly lit, have damaged furniture, are cold and have insufficient electrical sockets.
- Areas of the boarding provision and school site are unsafe and leaders have failed to complete the necessary health and safety checks. Legionella testing and some portable

electrical appliance testing is late. Many bedrooms and showers have mould that is not treated. Some pathways and steps around the site are unsafe.

- Young people raised some concerns regarding food, but accepted that the kitchens did well with trying to cater for a wide range of likes and dislikes.
- The school's information shows that the vast majority of young people made progress from their initial starting points across the curriculum, including in English and mathematics.
- The young people are able to build trusted and secure relationships with the adults who are looking after them. Staff know them well, listen to them, spend time with them, protect them and promote their welfare. The young people are able to develop an appropriate sense of belonging. They make progress and have a range of positive experiences.
- Staff support the young people, including those who cannot communicate verbally, to participate in day-to-day and more complex decisions about their lives appropriately. Staff help the young people to understand why it may not be possible to act on their wishes and why staff make certain decisions in the best interests of the young people. Young people have access to an independent advocate and, where appropriate, an independent visitor.
- The young people attend lessons and make good progress from their starting points. Staff are ambitious for them and support them to attend and do well in their education. There is effective liaison between the boarding provision, teaching staff and headteacher.
- The young people enjoy a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities, including activities in the local community, as appropriate, irrespective of any disability they may have. They are able to participate in after-school activities, community-based activities and school trips and holidays. Staff support the young people to engage in faith-based activities if they wish.

School details

Unique reference number	117035
Social care unique reference number	SC043035
DfE registration number	885/6026
Inspection number	10012929

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school. The inspection of boarding provision 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	Other Independent School
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	16
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	45
Proprietor	Haleh Mirkamali
Chair	Hekmat Kaveh
Headteacher	Malcolm Wood
Annual fees (day pupils)	N/A
Annual fees (boarders)	£25,800–£27,500
Telephone number	01684 892 300
Website	www.abbeycollege.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@abbeycollege.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 November 2012

Information about this school

- Abbey College provides full-time education for 45 male and female students from all around the world.
- The college was established in 1979. All students board on the main college site.
- The college runs a number of Easter and summer vacation courses.
- For all students, English is not their first language.
- There are no students with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school aims to: 'foster a community of international understanding and shared values in which overseas students receive the quality of academic education and support in English Language which will enable them to succeed... and progress successfully to higher education'.
- The school does not use alternative educational provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was integrated with an inspection of the boarding provision and was carried out with one day's notice.
- The college was previously inspected in November 2012 and a monitoring visit took place in May 2013.
- The inspectors met with a number of key staff including senior managers, the proprietor, the behaviour manager, residential staff and the directors of academic study.
- Inspectors toured the premises accompanied by members of the senior management team.
- Inspectors also met with groups of pupils and considered the views of parents and carers through Parent View.
- The inspector observed teaching across the school in a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science, economics, humanities and information technology.
- The inspector also reviewed work in pupils' books and scrutinised the college's assessment information.
- Inspectors examined a number of key policies including safeguarding, behaviour, admissions, attendance, anti-bullying and the curriculum.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hewston	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Dawn Bennett	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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