

# Hockerill Anglo-European College

Hockerill College Academy Trust

Dunmow Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 5HX

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

Hockerill Anglo-European College is an academy converter, situated within easy access of Bishop's Stortford town centre. It offers education to 841 pupils aged from 11 to 17, including 316 boarders. Boarders are accommodated in six boarding houses, which are located within the college campus. All the boarding houses provide self-contained facilities that include showers, bathrooms, toilets, common rooms, games rooms and kitchen facilities. The boarding provision was last inspected in January 2016.

**Inspection dates:** 12 to 14 March 2019

**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:** outstanding

**Date of last inspection:** 25 January 2016

## Key findings from this inspection

This boarding school is good because:

- Boarders thrive and flourish, emerging as ambitious and well-rounded individuals.
- Leaders and managers are positive and ambitious.
- Leaders and managers provide strong supervision and support for boarding staff, who act as exceptional role models for boarders.
- Boarders feel safe. They have strong relationships with the staff.
- Boarders enjoy access to a range of interesting and engaging activities.
- A culture of mentoring, peer support and leadership permeates the boarding provision.
- Vulnerable boarders benefit from quick and responsive interventions.

The boarding school's areas for development:

- In one instance, required information was not shared with the internal health and welfare service.
- Monitoring has not identified weak risk assessments in one boarding house.
- Some boarding areas have not been well maintained, and monitoring has not identified this.

## What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

### Recommendations

- Ensure that monitoring arrangements are strong enough to identify issues with records and the quality of accommodation.
- Make and retain full records of any response to allegations.
- Inform the health and well-being service when children raise concerns about self-harm.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is a good boarding school with some significant strengths. The strengths result in boarders who thrive and flourish. Boarders emerge as well-rounded and balanced individuals who ambitiously pursue their talents. Although some shortfalls have been identified at this inspection, leaders and managers have the capacity and

determination to put them right.

Boarders build strong and lasting relationships with other boarders and with staff. The staff act as exceptional role models, going above and beyond to enhance boarders' experiences. The boarders make significant social, emotional and education progress because of the support that they receive.

Boarders have access to an on-site health centre. Skilled professional medical staff provide a hub that caters for boarders' physical and emotional well-being. A focus on well-being is evident throughout the boarding houses. Activities include meditation, mindfulness, sports and exercise classes. These activities build resilience and provide stress relief for boarders who are feeling pressured.

Boarders enjoy access to a range of interesting and engaging activities before and after school. They also benefit from exciting trips abroad. These activities link to boarders' career choices. Boarders develop their knowledge through rich and practical experiences. Boarders' involvement in planning these trips provides rich learning opportunities and develops organisational fundraising skills.

Boarders make many positive contributions to the local community and to their boarding houses. A culture of mentoring, peer support and leadership is threaded through the boarding experience. Boarders welcome one another. They provide positive influence and regulate one another.

Leaders and managers have reflected on the process of admission to boarding and have made improvements. As a result, introductions to boarding are well planned and managed.

Boarders enjoy food that is appetising, appealing and varied. There are ample choices. Dietary requirements are routinely catered for. Boarders have opportunities to learn about new foods. There is an emphasis on healthy, nutritious options.

Feedback from families is generally positive. The college undertakes its own consultation with families. Leaders and managers are responsive and act on the findings.

Boarders personalise their rooms with reminders from home. This gives boarders a sense of belonging. Generally, accommodation is homely and comfortable and provides enough space in which to relax, study and prepare food. However, there are some areas that have not been well maintained. Monitoring has not identified this.

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

Safeguarding is good. The boarders feel safe. When safeguarding concerns are escalated to the designated safeguarding lead, the response is quick. This results in these boarders being supported with clear welfare plans, a comprehensive chronology and effective risk assessments.

The school provides safeguarding information-sharing sessions for staff, pupils and parents. External providers are also invited. Parents who have attended these talks spoke about how the sessions have supported them to meet the needs of their children.

Boarders' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, articulate and hospitable. Interventions are designed to help boarders reflect. Sanctions are proportionate, and there is a focus on positive rewards. Boarders understand what is expected of them and the rationale for the rules in place.

Leaders and managers ensure that safe recruitment systems are well embedded. Recruitment files are detailed and well constructed.

Vulnerable boarders are supported by staff. Interventions are quick and responsive. Boarders can access the counsellor and behaviour adviser for time-limited work that is effective. However, in one instance, follow-up work and support planning were not clear, and there was no welfare plan in place. Information that should have been shared with the internal health and welfare service was not. Therefore, the opportunity for additional input to and scrutiny of the decision-making and support being offered was missed.

The staff undertake room-sharing risk assessments. The quality of these vary. Some are comprehensive. However, monitoring has not identified that risk assessments for one boarding house do not consider some known risks and are overly positive.

Recent allegations against staff have been well managed. However, in one instance, records relating to an allegation against a member of staff were not on file. A lack of record-keeping prevents effective oversight of the action taken in response to concerns.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Leaders and managers are positive and ambitious. They have high expectations of the staff and boarders. The boarding provision is led by an experienced and established director of boarding who is part of the senior leadership team.

The boarders have strong relationships with the staff who support them. They talked with enthusiasm about the staff. The links between academic staff and boarding staff are seamless. Together, the staff provide a holistic approach to boarders' care and education. Consequently, boarders excel.

The staff understand the ethos and principles of the school. A culture of teaching boarders responsibility, developing a moral compass and building confident young leaders is embedded into practice.

Leaders and managers prioritise the boarders' needs; they are focused on delivering

a high-quality service. Leaders and managers understand the progress that the boarders make.

An ethos of tolerance permeates the service. Boarders spoke with passion about the opportunities to explore issues relating to diversity. Girls spoke with confidence about being encouraged to develop leadership skills.

Leaders and managers provide strong supervision and support for boarding staff. The staff feel well supported by colleagues and their managers. The staff value the opportunities in formal meetings to discuss and reflect on their roles and practice.

High-level monitoring is strong. Governors are interested in and actively monitor the service. However, day-to-day monitoring has not identified some of the shortfalls that were identified at this inspection.

## 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 watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried 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:** SC061728

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Richard Markham

**Type of school:** Boarding school

**Telephone number:** 01279 658451

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## Inspectors

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