

Felixstowe International College

Garrison Lane, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 7RE

Inspection dates

14–16 May 2019

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Sixth form provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and the school's leaders have successfully addressed the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The school now provides a good quality of education.
- The advisory board has contributed well to improvements in the school. However, too much work falls on the same few members. On occasion, this impacts negatively on the board's ability to hold leaders to account.
- Improvements to teaching over time across a range of subjects have ensured that pupils make good progress. Systems to assess pupils' progress are now established. Teachers use these effectively to plan for learning.
- Pupils have positive attitudes when in lessons. A few do not always complete their homework tasks and a minority arrive late to their lessons.
- Pupils' attendance is high. They enjoy coming to school and are proud of their achievements. They are well looked after and say they feel safe.
- The curriculum has been reviewed so pupils now access a broad learning experience.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. Some younger pupils' cultural understanding is underdeveloped.
- The school provides pupils with a wide range of clubs and additional activities and they enjoy these.
- Parents, carers, staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's surveys have positive views about the school.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well. In 2018, the school was placed first for Advanced Level performance in Suffolk.
- Leaders have started to find other schools to work with to enable pupils to practise their English. These links with other schools are not yet well developed.
- Leaders' efforts to improve the school have ensured that the independent school standards are now fully met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership further by:
 - recruiting more external members to the advisory board to increase further the rigour with which they hold leaders to account
 - actively seeking to work with other schools, particularly schools with a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, in order to develop good practice.
- Ensure that pupils consistently complete their homework and arrive punctually at the start of the school day.
- Develop younger pupils' cultural awareness.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have carefully considered the findings of the previous inspection and worked well as a cohesive team to address any identified weaknesses. They have successfully implemented their plans to ensure that the school offers a good quality of education and that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders monitor the progress and impact of their actions against their strategic plan. The principal has devised a well-thought-out schedule to monitor, evaluate and review the work of the school. This includes times to conduct learning walks, look at pupils' books, conduct teachers' performance management, conduct pupil surveys and report to parents on their child's progress.
- The proprietor accompanies members of the senior leadership team and the advisory board when they visit lessons and review the quality of the accommodation. After these visits, she is given time to reflect and to write a report of her findings. The proprietor has also attended meetings of the senior leadership team. This gives her the opportunity to identify what the school is doing well and what needs to improve.
- Leaders have detailed risk assessments in place in order for the school to operate smoothly. Bespoke risk assessments are produced for additional activities such as school trips.
- Leaders have detailed information on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They use this information to identify trends and patterns. For example, when they identify any weaker aspects of teaching from their monitoring, they set the teacher targets and then revisit the lesson to look for the impact of their support.
- Teachers' performance is managed well against the Teachers' Standards. The arrangements to appraise teachers' performance are clear and include a number of targets to make them think about how they teach, and how well they contribute towards whole-school improvement.
- Staff spoke positively about the recent training they received. They have looked at the types of activities pupils like and at which activities help them learn best in lessons. They have also looked at aspects of the curriculum and how well this is covered through their teaching.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the school. One parent stated, 'I am satisfied with all aspects of the school and am grateful for the dedicated teachers.' These positive views of the school were also expressed by staff and pupils who completed their own surveys.
- The curriculum has been suitably broadened to ensure that pupils receive a balanced education. Leaders are implementing the aims identified in the school's curriculum policy. They have also reviewed the range of qualifications on offer. These now include BTEC National Diplomas in digital technology and in sport, health and fitness.
- School leaders have started to forge links with two primary schools, primarily for the pupils' benefit so that they can regularly and confidently converse in English with pupils who have a similar range of vocabulary. Leaders have not yet worked sufficiently with

schools that have a similarly high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. This limits the possibility of sharing good practice.

- Pupils are also offered a range of additional activities to supplement their learning. These include bush craft, dance and canoeing. They enjoy these and take pride in their achievements.
- Reporting to parents is regular and detailed and covers pupils' academic performance as well as their attitudes to learning. Parents feel well informed about how well their child is doing at the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well. The school's Christian ethos encourages pupils to reflect on their actions and values. They understand right from wrong and strive to 'do the right thing'. They are provided with several opportunities to work with one another and to make a positive contribution towards the local community. For example, they have helped to clean the local beach and they sang at Felixstowe's Christmas lights ceremony. Younger pupils demonstrated a more limited awareness of British and European culture and institutions.

Governance

- The school does not have a governing body. Arrangements to ensure accountability are managed through the advisory board. This board consists of the three existing senior leaders, a parent and one external member. While the external member brings experience of senior leadership of a local secondary school, the proprietor acknowledges that the board would benefit from more external members to secure a greater degree of accountability at senior level.
- Nonetheless, the existing arrangements have ensured that the school has moved on from its previous position. The advisory board meets once every half term and minutes of meetings reflect the degree of challenge presented by the external member. The external member seeks evidence of impact through her challenging line of questioning.
- The advisory board receives half-termly updates on the school's progress against its action plan. The external member of the board visits the school regularly to test out for herself what she is told by the school's senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy published on its website.
- Staff have received up-to-date training in all matters relating to safeguarding. They have a good understanding of relevant documentation and policies, including the government's 'Prevent' duty.
- The school's single central record of recruitment checks on the suitability of staff who work at the school is compliant with requirements.
- Arrangements for signing in visitors to the school are secure and the school exercises due diligence and care in checking the suitability of guest speakers to the school.
- Procedures for teachers raising concerns about pupils are known and understood. Record-keeping is meticulous.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers' strong subject knowledge ensures that they plan effective learning opportunities that support pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding well across a range of subjects.
- Teachers make clear to pupils at the start of the lesson what they expect them to have learned by the end. Teachers typically put the learning into context by reminding pupils about the previous lesson and drawing on previously acquired knowledge. They also inform pupils what they will be covering in the next lesson.
- Teachers routinely make reference to subject-specific terminology and expect pupils to learn these words and use them when responding to examination-type questions. This routine use of subject vocabulary enables pupils to understand examination questions better and answer questions more accurately.
- Teachers make effective use of a range of resources. For example, teachers make good use of film clips and mini whiteboards to test pupils' understanding of what they are being taught. This complements the high-quality texts that pupils access.
- Teachers base their lessons around the schemes of learning which exist for every subject. These schemes of learning allow for pupils' development of skills and knowledge and for the different needs of pupils.
- Teachers now know the starting points of pupils in their subjects. Leaders have refined their systems to establish baselines and this information is used by teachers to plan lessons which meet the needs of individual pupils based on their starting points.
- Regular assessments throughout the year, in line with the school's policy, enable teachers to identify how well pupils are progressing and also to see if there are any gaps in their knowledge.
- Pupils are given aspirational targets to work towards and they know and understand these.
- The teaching of conversational English is strong. Pupils enjoy these lessons and are developing a secure grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar. In one of these lessons, observed pupils were preparing for a 'balloon debate'. They learned how to carefully structure an argument for why their character should remain in the balloon and why someone else should be evicted. The impact of these lessons was also evident when pupils spoke to the inspector about why they liked their school, using a range of vocabulary in order to justify their answers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves safe. They receive a detailed induction when they start at the school and this information is refreshed at the start of each year. They are encouraged to be vigilant when going into the town and understand

the importance of going in twos in order to remain safe.

- School leaders manage pupils' safety well. Regular health and safety audits ensure that the school building is safe. Fire drills take place at appropriate intervals and fire safety equipment is regularly tested.
- Pupils understand different types of bullying but say they do not experience bullying at the school. If they are experiencing any personal issues, they are able to access a member of staff who is a trained counsellor, as well as having access to an independent listener.
- Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety and of the risks associated with the use of mobile phones and the internet. Strict procedures are in place for younger pupils' access to mobile phones. The school has secure systems in place to ensure the suitability of websites that pupils can access.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop their leadership skills through a range of activities. These range from being awarded the responsibility of head girl and head boy, serving as a prefect or engaging in fund-raising activities or serving in the local Air Cadets.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem has been developed through the provision of regularly timetabled English conversation lessons. These lessons have also played a key role in improving their academic outcomes over time, as they are able to understand better the examination questions and to express themselves more clearly in written English.
- Pupils receive appropriate careers guidance from a designated member of staff. Additionally, guest speakers have made presentations to pupils during their assemblies. These speakers have included a general practitioner, a nurse, a psychologist and an engineer. On the second day of the inspection, a group of pupils were visiting Suffolk College. This provided them with the opportunity to mix with English-speaking pupils within the same age range to discuss career choices.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well-mannered and courteous towards their teachers and one another. They have positive attitudes towards their learning in the classroom and arrive at lessons with the correct equipment and ready to learn. They wear their school uniform smartly.
- There have been no fixed-period or permanent exclusions since the previous inspection.
- The inspector's scrutiny of behaviour logs shows that most sanctions are awarded to pupils who do not complete their homework or who arrive late to lessons. However, the number of pupils who receive detentions for this has decreased year on year.
- Leaders log rewards and sanctions electronically. This enables them to identify trends and patterns and to intervene quickly if required.
- Pupils' attendance is high. They rarely miss a day at school, unless they are unwell or attending college open days or interviews.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The introduction of conversational English has had a clear impact on improving pupils' outcomes. Their confidence in understanding written English and in articulating responses to questions has been strongly developed.
- Reading is encouraged and has also contributed towards pupils' improved outcomes. Pupils willingly read aloud in lessons. This is a clear sign that their confidence in reading written English had improved.
- GCSE outcomes in 2018 were good. Pupils achieved exceptionally well in biology, chemistry and physics, with 75% of pupils attaining grades 7 to 9. Pupils also attained highly in mathematics and economics. Pupils attained grades 4 to 9 across all subjects, including art and English as a second language, with the exception of economics. These outcomes represent good progress from pupils' different starting points.
- The inspector's scrutiny of pupils' work across a range of subjects shows that this good progress is being maintained in all year groups due to the consistency in the quality of teaching that pupils experience.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education. Guidance provided to pupils through assemblies, impartial careers sessions and one-to-one tutorials is well considered. Most pupils choose to continue their studies in the sixth form at Felixstowe International College.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Outcomes achieved by students in 2018 were impressive. Students made progress which was well above average. This placed the school in first position for A-level performance in Suffolk.
- Leaders' monitoring of students currently in Year 13 shows that, despite some variation in expected outcomes, good progress is being maintained based on students' starting points. The inspector's scrutiny of students' work across a range of subjects supports this view.
- The shared leadership arrangements within the small senior leadership team and by the careers adviser are appropriate and ensure that the quality of the sixth-form provision is effective. These colleagues liaise well with each other to ensure that students are known as individuals.
- Relationships between teachers and students are positive. Students appreciate their teachers' strong subject knowledge. Teaching is well planned and is carefully structured to build on students' prior knowledge. Regular assessments in all subjects allow teachers to identify weaknesses or gaps in students' knowledge and to adapt their teaching to fill these gaps.
- Students have a choice of subjects to study in the sixth form. Despite the small size of the sixth form, leaders have expanded the sixth-form offer. Subjects include mathematics, further mathematics, biology, chemistry, psychology, economics, media studies, art and history. Retention of students from Year 12 to Year 13 is high.
- Students have positive attitudes towards their studies. They attend school regularly and their attendance is high. They work well independently, but also work productively with

their peers. They have benefited from the additional English lessons and are able to express themselves more clearly than was previously the case.

- Students are well supported when planning for the next steps in their education. Provision is made for them to take part in work experience or work shadowing. They also receive personalised tutoring and good-quality careers guidance. They are supported well when applying to universities. Many chose to study at universities in the United Kingdom, while others chose to study abroad. Courses being considered include psychology, football coaching, bio-medical science, fashion design and financial management.
- Students are provided with several opportunities to develop their leadership skills. They are responsible for managing the attendance registers and for collecting in pupils' mobile telephones during the week. Sixth-form students take on the role of head boy and head girl and contribute towards the smooth running of the school, acting as role models to the younger pupils. They lead whole-school events, such as fund-raising activities for national charities.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Students say they feel safe in school. They have access to a counsellor and are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 124899 |
| DfE registration number | 935/6076 |
| Inspection number | 10093913 |

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.

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| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent boarding school |
| Age range of pupils | 9 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 19 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 14 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Su Yeun Yu |
| Principal | Rebecca Mainprice |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £24,000 |
| Telephone number | 01394 282388 |
| Website | www.ficedu.org |
| Email address | fic-uk@hotmail.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 3–5 October 2017 |

Information about this school

- Felixstowe International College is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) as a day and boarding school with a Christian ethos. The school is registered for 32 pupils and 48 boarders between nine and 19 years. There are currently 19 pupils, all of whom are boarders.
- The school is currently operating entirely from the boarding school site. All pupils are now taught in the boarding house in Maybush Lane, Felixstowe. The principal informed the DfE of this new arrangement by email on 8 October 2018. At this stage, the proposed time for

returning to the Garrison Lane site remains unclear.

- Most pupils are from Korea and a few are from China and Thailand. All of them speak English as an additional language and are at different stages of learning English.
- No pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils are eligible for free school meals.
- The previous principal resigned in February 2019. An interim principal led the school until the new principal took up her post in March 2019.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- In the social care inspection of the boarding provision in April 2016, inspectors identified that there were seven unmet national minimum standards. In the standard inspection of the school in October 2017, the school did not meet all the independent school standards. Subsequently, the DfE issued a restriction notice on 13 September 2018 to prevent the school from admitting new pupils. School leaders did not appeal against this decision.
- The DfE commissioned an emergency inspection on 1 November 2018 to check that the independent school standard relating to the keeping of admission and attendance registers was met. The inspection found that the school met this standard.
- The inspector met with the proprietor, the principal and two deputy principals, a group of teachers and a member of the advisory board. The inspector also met with a group of pupils and a group of sixth-form students.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school documentation, including policies; behaviour and attendance logs; records of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; school improvement planning documentation; and information on pupils' achievement.
- The inspector observed pupils' learning in Years 9 and 11 as well as in the sixth form. Six lessons were jointly observed with the principal or one of the deputy principals. The inspector also looked at pupils' books.
- The inspector reviewed the school's single central record of recruitment checks on the suitability of staff who work at the school.
- The inspector considered the views of 12 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as seven free-text responses. The inspector also considered the nine responses to the staff survey and the 13 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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