

Harrow House International College

Harrow Drive, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1PE

Inspection date

23 May 2019

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Boarding provision outcome

The school does not meet all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 1, 2(1)(a-b), 2(1)(b)(i) and 2(2)(g-h)

- At the time of the previous standard inspection, there were weaknesses identified in the school's written policy, plans and schemes of work. Senior leaders had not ensured that, across the International Academic Semester Programme (IASP), schemes of work were in place to consistently take into account what pupils already know, or their level of English. Since that time, leaders have reviewed their schemes of work, so that appropriate expectations have been introduced across a range of subjects to provide a scaffold for teachers and pupils.
- Plans and policies take account of pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs. Leaders ensure that a range of activities, including off-site excursions and visits, enhance pupils' learning and their enjoyment. Schemes of work ensure cross-curricular opportunities are actively promoted. For example, visits to Winchester help to engage pupils in their studies of Tudor England and support them to reflect on law, order and society.
- Leaders ensure that British values are actively promoted. For example, there are units to promote tolerance and affirm the right of individual liberty, such as what is meant by, and opposing, Islamophobia. However, pupils are not learning about different faiths and religions as prominently as they could. The implementation of this part of leaders' intentions through their schemes of work is not promoted or checked consistently.
- Leaders also ensure that there is an enrichment programme to supplement the core curricular offer. As a result, pupils engage in a broad range of alternative clubs and experiences after school and in the evenings, including, for example, local excursions and accessing various sporting activities. These provide further and essential experiences for pupils who board at the school.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met.

Paragraphs 3(a), 3(c), 3(d) and 3(g)

- Some key weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remain since the previous inspection. Leaders and teachers do not identify pupils' particular barriers to learning with sufficient precision in order to plan lessons or activities to fully meet the range of pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils' progress remains too variable, particularly in subjects other than English.
- Teachers do not take pupils' prior attainment into account well enough when planning lessons, particularly in subjects such as history and geography. There is often an over-reliance on presenting work in the same way, which is often heavily structured. As a result, pupils produce much similar work that is not consistently well matched to their ability.
- Teachers do not provide enough high-quality opportunities for pupils to write at length and to apply what they have learned across the curriculum. The lack of different writing styles and genre limits pupils' creativity and ability to write for different reasons and audiences.
- Teachers' use of ongoing assessment to support pupils' learning is weak. For example, the quality of teachers' feedback to pupils is too variable. Some comments are explicit and help pupils to understand precisely what they can do to improve their work. However, there are often times when teachers do not provide clear and considered guidance. Furthermore, feedback is not followed up well enough. This limits the progress that some pupils make over time, including in English.
- These standards are not met.

Paragraph 3(b)

- Leaders have ensured that pupils are keen and motivated. Teachers promote a positive climate for learning so that pupils contribute well in lessons and show positive attitudes to learning.
- This standard is met.

Paragraph 4

- Leaders have introduced a framework to check pupils' performance and progress. This ensures that all pupils are assessed on entry to the school. They have also introduced a round of 'pupil progress meetings' to evaluate how well each pupil is doing. These are positive steps and helpful additions. However, the implementation of some of these activities is still too recent to have yet had a discernible impact on pupils' achievement.
- The standard in this paragraph is met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 6, 7, 7(a), 7(b), 8 and 8(a)-(b)

- At the previous inspection, the welfare, health and safety of pupils were found to be inadequate. Much of this was associated with the quality of care and provision for boarders. However, leaders, including the proprietors, have been quick and diligent in their response to address the concerns raised at that time.
- Leaders have taken effective action to remedy weaknesses in their safeguarding arrangements. There is now a tangible culture for safeguarding and protecting pupils,

including looking after children on the school site or in the boarding accommodation. For example, residential meetings have been introduced which check pupils' welfare at intervals during their stay.

- The implementation of the school's safeguarding and health and safety policies is rigorous. The proprietors have also commissioned external agencies to audit the school's work, including regular premises checks to show that the written risk assessments are being implemented. As a result, pupils are kept safe and there is confidence in the school's systems and staff's expertise to suitably care for all pupils.
- In October 2018, several shortcomings in the boarding provision were identified. However, leaders have been quick and decisive in their response to ensure that the school is now compliant with the national minimum standards (NMS) for boarding schools that relate specifically to boarders' safety.
- These standards are met.

Paragraphs 12, 14, 16 and 16(a)-(b)

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is fully implemented. Leaders ensure that fire drills have increased and are frequent. Risk assessments, policies and practice relating to all aspects of fire risk are in place to help keep pupils, staff and visitors safe. This includes weekly alarm checks and equipment testing.
- The proprietors also ensure that there is a written risk assessment policy in place. This covers the full range of different risks and hazards associated with the school's activities, premises and personnel. Leaders have been assiduous in checking and evaluating this through external audits. Consequently, previous unmet standards in relation to these areas are met.
- The standards in this part are met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 17, 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(a) and 18(2)(e)-(f)

- During the previous inspection, a few omissions were identified on the school's single central record (SCR). Though few, they were serious breaches and, together with weak recruitment practice, meant that pupils were put at some unnecessary risk of harm.
- Leaders have ensured that the SCR is now complete. Omissions in terms of relevant checks on those who have worked overseas, including obtaining certificates of good conduct, are now fully satisfied.
- The headteacher now has a good knowledge of staff training, vetting and recruitment practice. This is used to check every individual robustly and to complete the SCR appropriately. Inspection evidence found that recruitment files and records are orderly and comprehensive. These are in line with government requirements, including 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2018).
- Consequently, there are no longer any gaps in the SCR or associated records, files and evidence. The standards in this part are therefore met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 25, 28(1)(d) and 30

- At the previous inspection, significant weaknesses in the school's boarding provision and accommodation compromised the safety and experience of pupils residing at the school. Owing to leaders' timely and effective action, the relevant standard 5 of the NMS for boarding schools is now met.
- Pupils use premises at school and boarding that are fully equipped, supervised and appropriate to meet their needs. Pupils have freedom in their residential boarding setting to make their own choices for making snacks or spending time communally or alone. Leaders ensure that facilities are available to support pupils in both their academic and domestic environments in order to develop independence.
- The proprietors ensure that the premises and accommodation are well maintained. Recent improvements, including alarmed doors in the school, promote further safety features to exceed some aspects of this standard. Therefore, as far as is reasonable and practical, the health and safety of pupils are ensured.
- The previous inspection found that some taps posed a scalding risk to pupils. This was due to a temporary issue that has now been fully resolved. Leaders have completed the necessary plumbing work so that water temperature is well regulated.
- The standards in this part are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1) and 34 (1)(a)-(b)

- Since the previous inspection in October 2018, leaders, including the proprietor, have responded positively to address many of the failings found in both the independent school standards and NMS for boarding schools.
- In particular, leaders and staff have worked diligently to promote pupils' safety and their well-being. This has led to a renewed energy and culture for safeguarding pupils.
- The proprietors took the wise decision to commission external advisers who have the knowledge and experience of running successful boarding schools to provide appropriate advice. Subsequently, the school has appointed an external chair to each of the new committees to oversee the running of the school. As such, there is now increased rigour and accountability in the school's systems. The proprietors seek first-hand evidence and information to justify leaders' evaluations and explanations of the school's progress against its action plan.
- Leaders are not complacent. They are showing the ambition and will to improve. Their current plans and actions are fit for purpose.
- However, in terms of the quality of education provided, there is still more work to do to improve the new systems that have recently been implemented. Lesson observations and discussions with teachers about pupils' progress lack sufficient focus on pupils' learning. As a result, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching remain too variable across different subjects.
- Therefore, due to persisting weaknesses in the leadership and management of teaching and learning, the standards in this part are not met.

Boarding provision

The overall experience and progress of children

The national minimum standards that were assessed during this inspection

NMS 5.7 and 5.8

- Leaders have ensured that any unauthorised persons are prohibited from accessing the boarding accommodation. This is due to enhanced checks. Furthermore, reporting procedures are in place when faults with locks, doors and keypads are identified. These contribute to the safety and well-being of pupils.
- Leaders ensure that CCTV is used appropriately. Staff have received guidance on the use of CCTV. The member of staff on duty is required to patrol the site areas that pupils frequent. Leaders have introduced a residential handover book to ensure those on duty are fully informed of particular concerns or changes that may affect pupils.
- These standards are met.

NMS 6.1-3

- Leaders have introduced care plans for those children who need them. These include details of dietary requirements and other special considerations and risks. However, current individual risk assessments do not align consistently with these documents.
- These standards are now met.

NMS 7.1-2

- These standards comply with other legislation, including the independent school standards and other requirements, for example, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Staff are trained to complete weekly alarm tests of the residential building. Other staff provide updates and information to uphold standards, for example, cleaners report faulty doors so that these may be fixed promptly. Leaders have ensured that the frequency of fire drills has increased, and there are now nine in a year.
- These standards are met.

NMS 8.3

- Boarders now have access to facilities for making a snack and drinks in a room dedicated to their sole use. In addition, a water fountain is available for boarders to use when this facility is locked at night.
- This standard is met.

NMS 11.1

- Leaders' focus on safeguarding is relentless and has had a positive impact on practice in the residential environment. For example, revised systems and some new initiatives ensure that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and report or escalate concerns promptly. These have been logged and followed up, as needed, including by the designated safeguarding leader (DSL). The DSL now has comprehensive and coherent records that outline concerns and action taken, including any activity with external agencies.
- This standard is met.

NMS 13.2, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5, 13.7 and 13.9

- The proprietor and senior leaders' oversight of the boarding provision has improved. They now understand the strengths and weaknesses because they scrutinise most records more closely and monitor practice more effectively.
- Academic and residential staff are now collaborating more effectively. A new reporting system is underpinning this and enhances communication.
- All incidents that have a potential safeguarding concern are now reported and responded to in a timely manner. The DSL lead ensures that comprehensive records are maintained that now detail the actions taken and the outcome.
- The complaints system is now fit for purpose. Records now confirm the actions taken and outcomes of complaints received from boarders and neighbours. These standards are met.

NMS 13.1, 13.6 and 13.8

- Although the proprietor is monitoring the quality of the provision more effectively, weaknesses remain in fully meeting all of the NMS and independent school standards.
- Leaders and managers have reviewed the boarding staff's training needs. They understand the training that staff require and have suitable plans in place to provide this training. However, this is in the early stages of implementation and some staff have not completed important training. In addition, senior boarding staff have not received formal supervision.
- The records relating to major sanctions and risk assessments are now in place, but leaders and managers do not monitor them effectively. As a result, these standards are not met.

NMS 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4 and 14.5

- The recruitment and selection of all new staff and volunteers now comply with child protection legislation and safer recruitment practices. The rigour of this process is reflected in the quality of recruitment files and safer recruitment practice seen since the previous inspection.
- These standards are met.

NMS 15.3, 15.4 and 15.5

- Staffing and the supervision of boarders have improved. Boarding staff are aware of their responsibilities and locate themselves in areas where boarders spend their leisure and recreation time. Additional staff are now available to run evening activities for the whole campus, including visiting guests. Boarders are advised to call a duty member of staff in an 'extreme emergency'. However, it is not clear what constitutes an 'extreme emergency' or how this is defined for pupils and staff.
- These standards are met.

NMS 17.1

- Consultation with boarders has improved. However, leaders do not routinely evaluate the feedback that boarders provide.
- This standard is met.

NMS 18.1 and 18.2

- Leaders have ensured that the complaints policy has been revised and improved. Complaints are now clearly recorded with an outcome in accordance with the school's complaints policy.
- These standards are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- The proprietors must ensure that the quality of education ensures that the following are met:
 - a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1)(a));
 - the written policy, plans and schemes of work (paragraph 2(1)(b)) –
 - take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an EHC plan (paragraph 2(1)(b)(i)); and
 - do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (paragraphs 2(1)(b)(ii)).
 - where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs (paragraph 2(2)(g));
 - that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress (paragraph 2(2)(h); and
 - fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 3(b)).
 - the standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.
- The proprietors must ensure that the welfare, health and safety of pupils are assured by ensuring that the following are met:
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school (paragraph 7(a)); and
 - that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7(b));
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school (paragraph 8(a)); 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 (paragraph 8(b));

- the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12);
 - the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff (paragraph 14);
 - the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the welfare at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy (paragraph 16(a)); and
 - appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16(b)).
- The standards about the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors (paragraph 17); and the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff at the school, other than the proprietor and supply staff, (paragraph 18(1)) are met where:
- no such person barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act (paragraph 18(2)(a));
 - in the case for any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside of 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 (paragraph 18(2)(e)); 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 (e), 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 (paragraph 18(2)(f)).
- The proprietors must ensure that the standards about the premises of and accommodation at the school are met (paragraph 22):
- the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures 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 temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users (paragraph 28(1)(d));
 - the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that, where the school provides accommodation, regard is had to standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools (paragraph 30).

The school now meets the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

- Boarding accommodation is reserved for the use of those children 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 pupils, or to boarding accommodation while occupied by pupils. (NMS 5.7)
- Any use of surveillance equipment (e.g. CCTV cameras) or patrolling of school buildings or grounds for security purposes does not intrude unreasonably on boarders' privacy. (NMS 5.8)
- The school ensures compliance with relevant health and safety laws by drawing up and implementing effectively a written health and safety policy. (NMS 6.1)
- 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. (NMS 6.2)
- The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. (NMS 6.3).
- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. (NMS 7.1)
- In addition, fire drills are regularly (at least once per term) carried out in boarding time. (NMS 7.2)
- In addition to main meals, boarders have access to drinking water and to food or the means of hygienically preparing food at reasonable times. Schools are sensitive to boarders' individual needs in this respect. (NMS 8.3)
- 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. (NMS 11.1)
- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. (NMS 13.2)
- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. (NMS 13.3)
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met. (NMS 13.4)
- The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the wellbeing of pupils. (NMS 13.5)
- The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix 1. (NMS 13.7)
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate. (NMS 13.9)
- 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. (NMS 14.1)

- For all persons over 16 (not on the roll of the school) who after April 2002 began to live on the same premises as boarders but are not employed by the school, an enhanced certificate with barred list information must be obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). (NMS 14.2)
- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with pupils, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with pupils. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence. (NMS 14.3)
- All persons visiting boarding accommodation (e.g. visitors, outside delivery and maintenance personnel) are kept under sufficient staff supervision to prevent them gaining substantial unsupervised access to boarders or their accommodation. (NMS 14.4)
- The school regularly monitors the suitability of any arrangements it makes for the appointment of guardians. (NMS 14.5)
- 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)
- Boarders are at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who is suitably qualified and experienced. (NMS 15.4)
- Staff know the whereabouts of boarders (or know how to find their whereabouts) in their charge at all times. (NMS 15.5)
- Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Boarders are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. (NMS 17.1)
- The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards. (NMS 18.1)
- The school's written record of complaints identifies those complaints relating to boarding provision, and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). (NMS 18.2)

School details

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| Unique reference number | 141138 |
| Social care unique reference number | SC481067 |
| DfE registration number | 838/6038 |
| Inspection number | 10100873 |

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.

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| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School status | Independent boarding school |
| Age range of pupils | 15 to 17 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 12 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 0 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Number of boarders on roll | 12 |
| Proprietor | Robert A'Barrow |
| Chair of committees | Alistair Ramsey |
| Headteacher/Director of Studies | Sharon Patterson |
| Annual fees (boarders) | £21,450 to £22,300 |
| Telephone number | 01929 424421 |
| Website | www.harrowhouse.com |
| Email address | sharon.patterson@harrowhouse.co.uk |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 16–18 October 2018 |

Information about this school

- Harrow House International College is a family-run business that has been in operation since 1969.
- Since 2014, it has been registered with the Department for Education (DfE) to deliver an International Academic Semester Programme (IASP) for up to 30 residential pupils. These pupils come to the United Kingdom from all over the world seeking accreditation in the Cambridge English Language Assessment examinations. The school also provides lessons and studies in other examinations to GCSE and A level, such as GCSE mathematics.
- None of the current pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are no identified disadvantaged pupils in the school at this time.
- The school does not use other registered alternative provision. However, it does have links with local state schools, which it uses to promote links and for some external support.
- The school was last inspected on 16 to 18 October 2018. At that time, its overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of this first progress monitoring inspection was to check the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its standard inspection in October 2018.
- This was an integrated inspection between social care and education (schools) remits for Ofsted to be able to take full account of the weaknesses identified at the school's previous inspection. The DfE required the school to complete an action plan. The DfE judged that the action plan was not acceptable in April 2019.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the headteacher/director of studies, college manager (head of boarding), the academic manager and the proprietors. They also met and spoke informally with some pupils of the school.
- Her Majesty's Inspector visited lessons in different subjects and reviewed a sample of pupils' work in their books, including non-English/topic books.
- A wide range of documents relating to the education and boarding provision was examined. This included the school's action plan, minutes of committee meetings, records of behaviour and bullying incidents and complaints, and safeguarding documents. The school's record of its checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and audits of health and safety were also scrutinised.
- Her Majesty's Inspector also held a telephone discussion with an external consultant providing support to the school, who is now also the chair of the various committees in the school.
- Both inspectors looked at the school premises and the boarding facilities.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Sharron Escott

Her Majesty's Inspector

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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