

Carfax College

Carfax Education Limited

39-42 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX1 2EP

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Carfax College is an independent tutorial school in central Oxford that provides one-to-one tuition, or tuition in very small groups, for up to 24 pupils. The college is not academically selective, and seeks to cater for all pupils, from 11 to 21 years old, who would benefit from the tutorial system with a highly individualised programme. A range of British and overseas pupils are accommodated with host families who live locally and who are approved by the college.

The college offers full-time A-level and GCSE courses, as well as tuition in preparation for entry to mainstream schools, universities and a range of specialist institutions. The college also offers short-term and part-time courses to pupils wishing to supplement their full-time education programme. These are available throughout the year, including during holiday times. Self-employed tutors, drawn mainly from the academic community in Oxford, provide the tuition.

At the time of the inspection there were 19 pupils on the school roll of which three were accommodated with host families. A new welfare officer has been appointed and was in the process of being inducted by the outgoing member of staff during the inspection.

A new principal was appointed in March 2018. An education inspection took place in March 2018 and the school was judged as good.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 November 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: good

Date of last inspection: 31 October 2016

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people build trusting and secure relationships with the adults around them. They enjoy the time that they spend with their host families and do not raise complaints. A young person said, 'I could not ask for a better match than with my current host family.' A parent of another young person said, 'I could not ask for a better host family; they are an excellent match.'

Education attendance and achievement are good, with young people engaging in their learning. Some young people, who have missed part of their education, are able to catch up and make good progress. Staff are determined to see each young person fulfil their potential. Staff motivate the young people to do well, and young people have clear goals for their future. A parent said, 'My son may have dropped back in his previous school but now we have never had such a sequence of positive reports.'

Staff plan inductions exceptionally well. They consider the individual needs of each young person and arrange for key people to be involved in the transition into the school. It is noteworthy that this process includes contextual safeguarding. There are clear arrangements put into place prior to admission for young people with any additional needs. Senior leaders ensure that staff and host families are well versed and well trained in the presenting issues. Each placement has every chance of success.

Staff promote young people's health well. As well as making sure young people attend routine appointments, staff support other approaches such as psychological support.

Young people engage in various activities in the local community such as the skatepark, football or rock climbing. They enjoy socialising in local restaurants while experiencing a range of cuisines.

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

Senior leaders work with other safeguarding professionals to keep young people safe in the context of complex scenarios, such as different standards in other countries and different expectations of parents. They have worked closely with the designated officer (DO) for safeguarding in the local authority to ensure that any external arrangements, organised by parents, are suitable.

Senior leaders have updated the safeguarding policy to include up-to-date information such as county lines and the national referral mechanism. They have ensured that there are clear guidelines for staff to contact the right agency for any specific concern. This includes the DO, who describes a good working relationship with the school and that the designated safeguarding lead in the school seeks her

advice when necessary.

There is a good approach to behaviour management. Expectations are high that young people behave in a mature and dignified way. This is evident in practice within a culture where staff expect that rewards should outnumber sanctions, which they do. Any sanctions are proportionate and appropriate, including those applied in host families. A parent said, 'I respect the boundaries that the host family have put into place and they are appropriate.'

Key staff work with other professionals and the young person's family regarding any emerging concerns about behaviour. There is good thinking about the underlying reasons, linking any such issues to emotional well-being if necessary. This means staff devise clear strategies that are successful, for example young people engaging with therapy.

Safeguarding leads can explain the reasons for decisions taken when addressing safeguarding issues. In some cases, they have not kept a written note of the rationale for their decisions. This is not in accordance with 'keeping children safe in education' guidance.

Leaders have reviewed the missing policy. This now refers to local police protocols and statutory guidance on missing. They have also updated the e-safety policy. This shows the responsibilities of host families and how staff support them to understand the issues surrounding e-safety. The recommendations from the previous inspection are met.

All necessary safer recruitment arrangements are being followed for staff and host families.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers provide the necessary supportive environment for young people, staff and host families. Staff meet with the key people involved in the young people's lives to plan effective transitions into the school. They ensure that staff and host families are upskilled to meet the individual needs of each young person.

In one case, the individual arrangements agreed between a host family and parents, to support a specific concern, were not shared with the school. This demonstrates a gap that existed in the school's agreements and guidance protocols with its host families. The principal understands that young people's welfare is the school's responsibility and took immediate action to ensure that host families are in no doubt of their responsibility to share any concern about a young person with the school.

Staff build effective relationships with parents and professionals to keep mental and emotional well-being at the centre of practice, so the young people are free to make

good academic progress. The staff team and tutors work collaboratively and consistently to provide stability and a joint accountability to ensure that young people make good progress.

The model of long- or short-term courses with a varying number of young people working with peripatetic tutors operates well, and the school is financially viable.

The responsibilities of the proprietor are delegated to the managing director of the Carfax Education Group, supported by additional senior colleagues. The managing director visits the school regularly, holding meetings with the principal and other senior leaders for compliance oversight. This includes safeguarding and any issues for specific young people. The managing director keeps a careful oversight of how to support staff to meet the needs of any young person with additional needs. The national minimum standard for monitoring is now met.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Keep a note of the action taken and the rationale for decisions reached when managing any safeguarding issues.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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: SC469798

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Dr Victoria Jefferson

Type of school: Boarding School

Telephone number: 01865 200676

Email address: enquiries@carfax-oxford.com

Inspectors

Keith Riley, social care inspector (lead)

Paul Taylor, social care inspector



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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
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