

Colchester Royal Grammar School

Colchester Royal Grammar School, 6 Lexden Road, Colchester CO3 3ND
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

This boarding school, situated in Colchester, is a maintained school with academy status. The school caters for boys aged 11 to 18 and for boys and girls in the sixth form. The school is academically selective. Boarding provision, for up to 30 boarders, is exclusively for sixth formers. The boarding accommodation is provided in two houses, both of which are situated on the main school site.

The boarding provision was last inspected in November 2016.

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 January 2020

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: 15 November 2016

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This school has a strong boarding provision that the boarders enjoy attending. The boarders are highly motivated and have a strong focus on academic attainment and achievement.

The staff are invested in the boarders. The staff are positive and are respectful and sensitive to the boarders' needs. The staff celebrate the boarders' achievements and actively demonstrate their pride in them.

The boarders have good relationships with the staff. The boarders said that the staff have got to know them well and have done so quickly. The boarders have bonded with each other and feel settled in the boarding provision.

Boarders are ambitious and focused and have the highest expectations. Their intelligence and drive, combined with staff support and the privilege of boarding, help them to achieve excellent examination results.

The boarding staff are alert to the individual and diverse needs of the boarders. They work hard to ensure that the boarders' mental health needs are supported and do not prevent them from achieving their goals.

The boarders are aware of routes to raise their concerns. These include the boarding council, boarding staff and the senior leadership team.

There have been improvements made to school house, particularly the showers and the lounge area. The absence of any communal lounge space in the second house is a notable gap. This limits the boarders' opportunities to relax and socialise informally. The boarding management team recognises this, and it is reflected in the boarding development plan.

The boarders have opportunities to participate in leisure activities. The head of boarding is conscious of the need to be persistent and creative in encouraging the boarders to pursue more than just academic attainment.

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

The boarders feel safe. They have access to a range of people with whom they can share concerns. These people include pastoral staff, boarding staff, a school counsellor and an independent listener. As a result, the boarders are confident that they can speak with people if they need to.

The staff are alert to the potential risks for the boarders. Incidents that may indicate concerns are recognised and recorded. This enables effective oversight and provides the opportunity for smaller, cumulative concerns to be recognised.

The boarders do not go missing from the boarding provision. Boarders record their entries and exits. If they do not return at the expected time, the staff act to locate them.

The boarders' behaviour is excellent. They are polite, courteous and considerate of one another.

The boarders said that they feel safe, that bullying is not an issue and that they have not experienced any racism, harassment or sexist behaviour. They said that they would talk to the head of boarding if they were made to feel uncomfortable or experienced any form of harassment.

The staff know how to raise concerns about the conduct of colleagues. The staff know who the designated safeguarding leads at the school are. This gives assurance that the staff will route concerns appropriately.

When safeguarding concerns arise, these are generally managed well by staff who have a good understanding of local and national risks. However, in one instance, although action was taken to safeguard the boarders, this action was not wholly proactive and no records were made. Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A new head of boarding is in post and leads a new boarding team. The staff have quickly settled into their roles. The head of boarding is respected by her staff and the managers have a high regard for her.

Despite being newly in post, the head of care and the boarding staff have strong knowledge of the boarders. They understand what motivates them and use this to enable communication and relationship-building.

The boarders spoke highly of the quality of induction into boarding. They said that this was effective and enabled a positive transition. Boarders who had not previously boarded settled quickly.

Managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. For example, the head of boarding has identified that supporting boarders to progress their independence is an area to develop further. Plans are in place to achieve this.

The boarders said that the staff have created a tolerant and diverse boarding community. There have been very few concerns raised about boarding. When issues do arise, the managers respond to these appropriately.

Boarding staff have an induction that is delivered by the head of boarding. They also undertake the Boarding School Association's induction course. All boarding staff have had safeguarding training. However, two of the four designated safeguarding staff are out of date with their safeguarding training. In addition, the first aid training certification for one member of the small boarding team has expired. This means that there are times when boarders are in the sole care of staff who do not have a current first aid training certificate.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Ensure that records are kept of safeguarding discussions and the subsequent actions taken.
- Ensure that staff training is kept up to date. This is particularly pertinent for first aid and safeguarding training.

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: SC018009

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr John Russell

Type of school: boarding school

Telephone number: 01206 509100

Email address: info@crgs.co.uk

Inspector

Ashley Hinson, social care inspector

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