

Abbey College in Malvern

253 Wells Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 4JF

Inspection date

10 July 2018

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Boarding provision outcome

The school meets all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 8, 8(a), 8(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c) National Minimum Standard 11.1

- At the time of the previous inspection in November 2017, inspectors found safeguarding was ineffective. This was because the proprietor and principal had failed to take effective measures to ensure that pupils were safe. Staff were uncertain about the procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns and disclosures. Pupils were not well informed about the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- The school's safeguarding policy remains compliant with the latest government guidance. It is available on the school's website.
- The school's safeguarding team has been strengthened through the recruitment and training of additional senior members of staff. Leaders now have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. The designated safeguarding leads work closely with external agencies, when this is necessary, to support pupils.
- Staff have received additional training to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. This includes developing their understanding of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and the prevention of radicalisation and extremism.
- Staff now receive regular safeguarding updates, including, when appropriate, any concerns about individual pupils. Because of the improved training and information sharing, staff have a greater awareness of their role in keeping pupils safe. Staff who were spoken to during the inspection were aware of the actions that they should take if they have a concern about a pupil's well-being.

- Senior leaders maintain appropriate written records of any concerns that they may have in relation to pupils' welfare. These records are detailed, recorded in a timely fashion and stored securely.
- The principal has adapted the school's citizenship curriculum to include a series of lessons which highlight issues relating to radicalisation and extremism. These will provide pupils with relevant knowledge and understanding to minimise any potential risks. Pupils are also taught how to keep safe through the school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum. This includes keeping safe when online.
- The school has introduced a missing child policy and procedure to be followed in the event of a pupil going missing from the school.
- Host families have completed safeguarding training and there are annual checks in place to ensure that they continue to meet relevant health and safety and welfare requirements.
- The actions taken by school leaders have addressed the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and safeguarding procedures are now compliant. The requirements for this part of the independent school standards and the national minimum standard are met.

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

Paragraph 18, 18(2), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f), 18(3), 21(3), 21(3)(b) National Minimum Standard 14.1

- At the time of the last inspection, some employment checks were incomplete. Specifically, checks on whether teaching staff were subject to prohibition notices had not been carried out. Senior leaders were over-reliant on an external company to undertake pre-employment checks and leaders were not clear what checks were made.
- Senior leaders have ensured that all the required checks for staff who work at the school have been completed. These checks are now routinely undertaken as part of the recruitment process for new members of staff. All information from these checks is recorded on the school's single central register.
- Appropriate checks have also been completed in relation to host families and approved contractors.
- All the requirements for this part of the independent school standards and for the national minimum standard are now met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25, 27, 27(b) National Minimum Standard 5.4, 6.2

- At the previous inspection, inspectors identified a number of failings in relation to the health, safety and welfare of pupils. For example, checks for legionella and the testing of some portable electrical appliances were late; some bedrooms were cold and had mould that was untreated; some pathways and steps around the site were slippery and poorly lit.

- The school's action plan outlined measures to address all the required areas. The proprietor and leaders have focused their attention on ensuring that concerns relating to health and safety have been dealt with as a priority. Some actions to improve pupils' welfare have also been completed.
- Pathways are now well maintained. Some new pathways have been built, while existing paths and patio areas have been cleaned and, in some cases, re-laid. A small amount of this work has yet to be completed but it is underway. Leaders plan to tarmac the roads across the site. This is likely to take place when the school is closed to pupils between the end of summer school and the start of the autumn term.
- Following the inspection, all radiators in classrooms and boarding houses were fitted with individual thermostats. All boarders were provided with thicker, winter duvets and all windows were checked to ensure that they could be fully closed. Due to this inspection taking place during the summer, it was not possible to test if the heating is now sufficient. However, staff and a pupil who was boarding over the winter reported that, following the last inspection, the heating was on for longer and rooms were much warmer.
- Legionella testing and the testing of portable electrical equipment now meets requirements. The school has reviewed its systems to ensure that electrical items are tested more routinely.
- Areas of mould have been treated and ventilation improved; for example, all hand driers are now in working order. Boarding accommodation and teaching blocks are being redecorated on a rolling programme. Some of this redecoration, including the painting and re-carpeting of a main teaching area, has been completed; other areas of redecoration will be completed during the autumn term. New blinds have been purchased for all bedrooms and new furniture, including mattresses and mattress covers, will be in place for the new academic year.
- External lighting has been installed across the site to ensure pupils and staff safety. While it was not possible to test this lighting during the inspection, sensors were clearly visible and pupils attending the summer school confirmed that the lights did come on during the evening.
- While in some cases the work is ongoing, the proprietor has taken reasonable steps to address the concerns identified at the time of the previous inspection. There are plans in place to complete the remaining aspects. The requirements of these independent school standards and the national minimum standards are, therefore, met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34 (1)(c) National Minimum Standard 13.1

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders and the proprietor had failed to ensure that all of the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools were met. As a result, there was a negative impact on pupils' health, safety and welfare.

- Leaders show a determination to improve aspects of health, safety and welfare across the school and they have written an action plan that is focused on the right priorities. They have taken prompt and decisive action to address the standards that were unmet at the previous inspection.
- The welfare team has been strengthened considerably through the introduction of a matron and a housemaster. An experienced welfare manager has also returned to work in the school. These changes, along with a restructured senior leadership team, have resulted in clear improvements to pupils' welfare arrangements.
- Regular meetings of the principal, proprietor and bursar ensure that there is a clear focus on the key areas for improvement.
- A new advisory board has been set up. The members of the board bring a wide range of appropriate experience and expertise. The board will support the proprietor in monitoring developments and ensuring that all the necessary standards are met. Because this board is newly established, it is too soon to see the impact of its work.
- The requirements for this part of the independent school standards and for the national minimum standard are met.

Boarding provision

Additional national minimum standards that were assessed during this inspection

Standard 3.4

- At the time of the previous inspection, the school failed to ensure that pupils' medication was administered safely. Staff did not have effective oversight of pupils' health needs and this put pupils' welfare and health at risk.
- To strengthen this aspect of pupils' welfare, a new matron has been appointed. The matron has considerable experience of working in boarding schools and, along with other members of the welfare team, she has completed relevant training in medication awareness and management.
- Policies that meet the necessary requirements in relation to the safe handling and administration of medication are now in place. These include a self-medication risk assessment. There are also clear systems for the handling of medication prescribed overseas.
- Only staff who have completed the appropriate training are permitted to administer medication.
- Relevant staff now have access to all the information that they require to meet the health needs of boarders. All treatment administered to boarders is clearly recorded. Although there were no full-time school pupils on site during the inspection, a summer school pupil's file was sampled. This confirmed that appropriate risk assessments were in place.
- A health care plan policy is in place to ensure that, where appropriate, staff are fully aware of pupils' medical needs. However, during the inspection there were no pupils on site who require a health care plan. It was not, therefore, possible to check the application of the policy in practice.
- This national minimum standard is met.

Standard 15.3

- At the time of the last inspection, the school had failed to ensure that boarding staff were sufficient in number, and had the training and experience needed, to safeguard pupils' welfare needs.
- The senior leadership team has been restructured so that one of the vice-principals now takes a lead on pastoral matters. The appointment of a matron, welfare manager and housemaster has added additional capacity and experience to the welfare team. The positive impact of these changes can be seen through the introduction of new policies, systems and actions to secure the health, safety and well-being of pupils.
- All staff have received additional safeguarding training.
- There are currently vacancies within the student services team. However, based on predicted pupil numbers for the autumn term, there are sufficient staff for the age, number and needs of boarders.
- This national minimum standard is now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets 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. 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 standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school (paragraph 7(a)); and
 - such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7(b)).
- Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 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 relates to the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff at the school, other than the proprietor and supply staff. The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person:
 - the person's identity (paragraph 18(2)(c)(i));
 - the person's medical fitness (paragraph 18(2)(c)(ii));
 - the person's right to work in the United Kingdom (paragraph 18(2)(c)(iii)); and
 - where appropriate, the person's qualifications (paragraph 18(2)(c)(iv));
 - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside 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 checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person’s appointment (paragraph 18(3)).
- The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is:
 - in relation to each member of staff (‘S’), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed (paragraph 21(3)(b)).
- 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 standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises (paragraph 27(b)).
- The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(a));
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(b)); and
 - actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1)(c)).

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

- All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the boarders to whom they are prescribed. Boarders allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so. (NMS 3.4)
- Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders are appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders with restricted mobility. (NMS 5.4)
- 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 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)
- The school’s governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary. (NMS 13.1)

- 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)
- 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)

School details

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| Unique reference number | 117035 |
| Social care unique reference number | SC043035 |
| DfE registration number | 885/6026 |
| Inspection number | 10055633 |

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 | 14 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 45 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 16 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Number of boarders on roll | 45 |
| Proprietor | Haleh Mirkamali |
| Principal | Mr Malcolm Wood |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | N/A |
| Annual fees (boarders) | £25,800–£27,500 |
| Telephone number | 01684 892 300 |
| Website | www.abbeycollege.co.uk |
| Email address | enquiries@abbeycollege.co.uk |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 14–16 November 2017 |

Information about this school

- Abbey College in Malvern is an independent school, which is registered to provide full-time boarding education for pupils aged 14 to 19 years.
- The school, which was established in 1979, caters for pupils from across the world. For all pupils, their first language is not English.
- All pupils board on the main school site.
- The school aims are 'to foster a community of international understanding and shared values in which overseas students receive the quality of academic education and support in English language which will enable them to succeed and progress successfully to higher education'.
- There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school runs Easter and summer vacation courses.
- Since the last inspection, an advisory board has been established to provide an additional level of scrutiny and challenge to school leaders.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress that the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools with which it was judged not to comply at its previous inspection.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection following the standard inspection in November 2017. The inspection was carried out without notice.
- Following the standard inspection in November 2017, the Department for Education accepted the action plan submitted by the school in June 2018.
- Inspectors met with the principal, vice-principal, bursar, welfare and boarding staff, members of teaching staff and one pupil. Inspectors also met with the proprietor.
- Inspectors toured the school site accompanied by members of the senior management team.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including records relating to safeguarding, statutory policies and information on the school’s website. The lead inspector scrutinised the school’s single central register.

Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector

Andrew Hewston

Dawn Bennett

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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