

International School of Creative Arts

Framewood Road, Wexham, Slough, Berkshire SL2 4QS

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

The school provides boarding for up to 100 students aged 15 to 19 who attend the school for varied arts-based courses. The school and boarding accommodation is based in the grounds of the Teikyo School on the outskirts of Slough. At the time of inspection, 42 students were boarding at the school with 63 students on school roll.

This inspection was welfare only

Inspection dates: 17 to 19 May 2022

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| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account | good |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
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| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
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The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Students enjoy boarding, as it supports them to access to the education that they need to progress in the arts. Students say they have made some really good friends. They have staff they like and feel that they can go to for help and support. Students enjoy easy access to London and Windsor, visiting a wide range of galleries, museums and other cultural events at weekends.

Students receive a well-planned induction to the school. Transitions for students moving into the school have been well managed. Restrictions and quarantine protocols as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic were particularly well managed and students felt cared for at this time.

Student views are actively sought. Leaders use meetings of the student representatives as a forum to help to improve the service. These meetings are regular and used to help make some improvements, such as changes to the academic day and the food available. While these meetings are beneficial, records of the meetings fail to demonstrate the actions taken to improve student life. This has made students feel as though the process does not address improvements students have suggested.

Students' individual cultures and identities are well considered. Issues regarding war and conflict between nations are not shied away from, for example, staff have actively reached out to support Ukrainian and Russian students to help them come to terms with the current conflict. The students, while worried for their family and friends at home, get on well with each other and tensions have not filtered into friendship groups. Students are tolerant and welcome each other's differences, including sexuality and gender identity. The menu caters for different cultural and religious dietary needs, and students are regularly asked to share their views on what food they would like.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the social development of many of the students. Staff have managed to support them since restrictions have been lifted, to help them access the community. This has enabled students to better understand and acclimatise to British life.

Students' emotional well-being is supported through strong relationships with key staff. Those who are struggling emotionally are supported to access external therapeutic professionals. Access to medical services is good and the school has established links with local healthcare providers. Plans for students with physical health conditions are clear and concise. However, plans for students with additional emotional well-being needs are less clear. Practice in relation to the administration of medication is not fully compliant with national regulations. Staff were unable to locate the records of administration of medication for the only child receiving medicine.

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

Students say that they feel safe attending the school. They identify staff that they can go to if they are worried or upset. They know that these people will help them as well as they can or redirect them to professionals who can provide further support. Although students feel confident that they can share concerns with staff, they do not have access to an independent person to raise concerns with. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know the processes to follow should they be concerned for students' welfare.

Safeguarding arrangements in the school are effective and any child protection concerns that arise in the school, or any concerns about children's safety at home, are swiftly shared with partner agencies. Records of actions taken are detailed, although recording of relevant dates is inconsistent, leading to some confusion about the timeline of events.

Staff are supportive, they know the students well and are aware of any particular risks or vulnerabilities of each individual student. Staff notice when students are not their normal selves and act to make sure help is made available. Staff are well trained to support children who may have experienced bullying or who self-harm. Staff share any concerns promptly with leaders, who communicate effectively with families and guardians to ensure that students receive the support they need.

Staff have had training in talking about relationships and sexual health. However, key boarding staff were not confident or comfortable talking about this. This could potentially hinder students having open discussions on sexual health and relationships, reducing their ability to make more informed decisions.

Students are protected from avoidable risk through consistent monitoring of all health and safety aspects across the school. However, areas of the boarding accommodation look institutionalised and dated. Leaders are aware of these shortfalls and are keen to address these with the landlord for the site. This leaves students feeling undervalued due to the poor quality of the soft furnishings.

Safer recruitment practice is followed for all staff across the school. This includes leaders satisfying themselves of the quality of recruitment for the school they share the site with. However, while references have been verified, it was not clear in a staff recruitment file that this has happened.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The leadership in the school is aspirational. There is a clear focus for students to pursue careers in the arts and the outcomes for students are positive. Leaders support students to prepare for higher education, with strong ties to a renowned university.

Boarding staff say that they feel well supported by the senior leaders in the school. They have access to varied training to meet the needs of the students and to develop their skills. Annual appraisals highlight areas for development and staff are suitably challenged through helpful conversations. Staff say they can approach senior leaders with their views and ideas or for help and direction.

Leaders are aware of the progress that students make, through close monitoring and liaison with tutors. The school is small and the principal is responsible for many areas, which has possibly led to some of the shortfalls identified during the inspection.

The boarding provision meets the aims stated in the guide to boarding. It provides a safe environment for students to access the school and progress in their studies of the arts. Those who choose other education pathways are advised on how to access other areas of education.

Leaders are continually seeking to improve the experiences of students. The school development plan is highly detailed and realistic about the potential barriers to students accessing the school during the global pandemic and conflicts between nations. Despite these factors, they are continuing to seek the best way to provide a quality experience for students.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve? Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:

- The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. Boarders are informed who this person is, and how to contact them and they are easily accessible. Boarders are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside telephone numbers, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner, to contact in case of problems or distress. (NMS 2.3)
- 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)

Recommendations

- The registered person should consider updating the soft furnishings in the boarding area to reduce the tired and institutional appearance.
- The registered person should review recording methods to ensure safeguarding records are clear, with accurate dates.
- The registered person should demonstrate that action has been taken as a result of student consultation.
- The registered person should review the recording process when seeking reference verifications as part of safer recruitment.

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: 2628154

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Robert Hunter

Type of school: Boarding school

Telephone number: 01753 208820

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Inspectors

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector

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