

Hockerill Anglo European- College

Hockerill College Academy Trust

Hockerill Anglo European College, Dunmow Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire
CM23 5HX

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Hockerill Anglo-European College is an academy converter situated within easy access of Bishop's Stortford town centre. It offers education to 925 pupils aged from 11 to 18, including 386 boarders. Boarders are accommodated in five boarding houses which are located on the college campus.

The director of boarding is suitably qualified and has been in post since January 2020.

This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the school.

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 June 2022, 13 September 2022 and 8 to 10 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be 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: 12 March 2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is a good boarding provision. Boarders receive child-centred care and support from staff who know them well. The boarders make considerable social, emotional and educational progress because of the support that they receive.

Boarders forge strong and lasting relationships with the staff who support them. Staff encourage boarders to make positive contributions to their boarding houses, the school and the community. Fundraising activities take place often to support chosen charities. Boarders contribute to house committee meetings, which ensures that their views are considered.

Boarders are enormously proud of their school. Their feedback about the quality of education is exceedingly positive. Attendance levels for boarders in education are exceptional. Boarding staff and academic staff work in partnership to provide consistency and stability. As a result of this collaboration, boarders are supported to achieve great success in their studies.

Boarders have extensive opportunities for after-school enrichment. A broad variety of clubs, sporting activities and trips support the boarders' interests and talents. Opportunities stemming from the Duke of Edinburgh award and the Combined Cadet Force provide boarders with exciting and interesting recreational pursuits. Boarders are stimulated and occupied by activities that help to develop their confidence and leadership skills.

Boarding staff understand and respond well to boarders' individual health needs. Boarders are provided with very good emotional support, clinical advice and monitoring. A qualified nurse oversees an on-site health centre. She has extensive knowledge of matters relating to children's emerging health issues and trends. A particular strength is the cultural and organisational approach to positive mental health awareness and support. Systems to identify and escalate concerns or trends are proactive and rapid. The on-site health team works closely with the boarding staff. The communication between these staff is strong and demonstrates a proactive response to boarders' health concerns.

Boarders say that boarding has helped them with their organisational skills, independence and confidence. They see this as the main benefit and strength of boarding. They are pleased to be preparing for their futures and adulthood with the additional confidence that boarding has brought them.

Feedback from parents is generally positive. Parents describe the boarding staff as 'fantastic' and 'very caring'. Overall, parents say that their children have developed their independence and resilience. One parent says that their child is now a 'responsible world citizen' because of boarding at this school.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Recent improvements mean that safeguarding concerns are usually managed carefully, following appropriate processes. Leaders usually follow up any concerns promptly with appropriate outside agencies and keep accurate records of any referrals. However, during the inspection, inspectors found that, on one occasion, external safeguarding agencies were not consulted when they should have been. This did not lead to harm to children in the school; however, senior leaders failed to manage the concern appropriately. Consequently, a more robust system has been agreed for future concerns.

The leadership team have improved children's safeguarding processes to keep children safe. There is a strong, qualified safeguarding team led by an experienced and well-trained designated safeguarding lead. Regular meetings provide a forum to discuss safeguarding concerns at the school. A proactive approach helps children to stay safe. Good communication with external professionals ensures that risks are shared, and strategies are devised and circulated. Hazards were found in the boarding houses. These included fire doors that failed to shut properly, fire doors routinely propped open, and an extension lead, which was plugged in and switched on, balancing on the taps of a sink. These hazards were rectified immediately, and a better monitoring system has been implemented to ensure that hazards are identified more quickly in the future. However, these shortfalls have been allowed to develop over time without adequate monitoring or response.

An in-depth fire risk assessment has been carried out by an external agency. The recently received report has identified several issues, including non-compliant fire doors. Leaders understand from the fire risk assessor that the remedial work did not impact on the safety of the children overnight due to the fire alarm system the school has implemented, there is a risk to the buildings, but not life, in the event of a fire. Senior leaders have implemented an extensive plan to address most of the identified deficiencies. All the non-compliant fire doors are planned to be replaced.

Relationships between staff and boarders are warm and nurturing. Boarders are confident to raise concerns with staff. Boarders say that they feel safe when they are staying away from home. Boarders who report that they have experienced bullying say that staff supported them well and the issue was resolved appropriately.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The director of boarding is an integral part of the senior leadership team. This demonstrates the importance of the boarding provision in the school. The director of boarding is responsible for the management and oversight of the boarding provision.

There are currently five boarding houses. Each house is led by an experienced and dedicated head of house. Regular formal meetings and daily contact between these leaders enable clear lines of responsibility and line management.

Staff say that they feel supported and inspired by their head of house. Staff have regular boarding reviews and individual performance appraisals. Formal team meetings focus on boarders' progress and individuals who need support. Effective communication between staff and managers ensures that there is consistency in the staff's approach.

Staff have access to a good range of training opportunities. Safeguarding training for staff has improved. Training provides staff with a child-centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding. This training, combined with the school's individual approach to recording safeguarding, ensures that staff have a clear understanding of how to respond to safeguarding concerns.

Leaders and managers strive to develop the boarding provision. The completion of a boarding self-assessment toolkit and the two-year boarding improvement plan form the clear objectives aimed at improving the boarding provision.

External monitoring arrangements are good. The governing body has good oversight of operational aspects related to boarding. Governors regularly visit and actively monitor the boarding provision. However, the internal monitoring of the houses has failed to identify several health and safety shortfalls that were identified during inspection.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve? Recommendations

- School leaders should ensure that all allegations made against staff are consistently managed in line with 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- School leaders should ensure that hazards in the boarding houses are quickly identified and rectified.

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.

Inspectors carried out inspection visits to the school in June 2022, September 2022 and February 2023. All the visits were part of the same graded inspection. The second and third visits were carried out to complete the inspection after Ofsted accepted some of the concerns raised by the school about elements of the initial inspection process.

Boarding school details

Social care unique reference number: SC061728

Headteacher/teacher in charge: David Woods

Type of school: Boarding school

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