

Colchester Royal Grammar School

6 Lexden Road, Colchester CO3 3ND

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

This 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. There are 994 pupils on the school roll. 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. At the time of this inspection, there were 20 boarders.

The head of boarding has been in post for four years and has a relevant qualification.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 March 2023

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.

Date of last inspection: 11 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There has been positive cultural change at this school. This has led to boarders feeling safer and confident that staff will address concerns that they raise. Boarders say that they feel well cared for and have not experienced sexism, racism or homophobia. Boarders understand that any student acting in ways that prejudice others will be dealt with appropriately by staff. Senior leaders provide a clear message to the student body that discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated.

The academic achievements of the boarders are exceptional. Boarders primarily go on to study at university after leaving the school. Several boarders have gone on to Oxford University and Cambridge University. The boarders' education is supplemented by evening and weekend study. Boarders say that this extra study helps them to achieve improved academic results.

Staff meet the individual needs of boarders exceptionally well. Boarders say that they have established trusting relationships with staff, particularly the head of boarding. All boarders spoken with named staff with whom they could share concerns.

The boarders are afforded opportunities to develop independence because of their experiences in boarding. The house matron has encouraged the boarders to be more proactive in their independence. The house matron has introduced rewards linked to cleanliness and tidiness. This has been beneficial to boarders as it prepares them for adult and university life.

There is an improved and well-managed oversight of boarders' health and well-being via the school's support hub. This includes joint work with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. Staff are more effective at assessing and targeting support for boarders with additional needs. Boarders who require support for medical and health needs are supported via hub staff, who refer them to the correct clinician or nurse. However, improvements are needed to ensure that staff know what medicines boarders have in their rooms and that these are stored safely and securely.

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

There has been evident progress in the school's processes to safeguard boarders. The safeguarding team has increased, systems have been improved and staff are more effective at identifying and capturing safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding systems are widely publicised and well embedded. Staff and boarders are aware of the reporting routes. This increases the safety of boarders and serves as a clear deterrent to those who may consider acting in unsafe ways.

There is a whole-school approach to safeguarding. Staff are adept at noticing low-level concerns and understand that these may lead to wider issues. Staff notice changes in eating habits and mental health presentation as well as more evident

concerns. Staff ensure that the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is fully embedded in boarding. This gives boarders consistent messages about consent, healthy relationships, identity and sexual health. The head of boarding has invited several external speakers into boarding to speak about topics related to online safety and PSHE. Boarding staff fully understand the importance of upholding safeguards. This increases boarders' safety and awareness.

Safer recruitment processes are followed. This ensures that only suitable staff are recruited to work with children.

On occasion, staff have propped open fire doors with wedges and other items in the main school. This prevents automatically closing fire doors from closing in the event of the fire alarm being activated. If left unchecked, this could lead to the more rapid spread of fire should one take place at the school.

Allegations against adults are infrequent and have been dealt with appropriately. However, on one occasion, in 2021, the record of an allegation did not include sufficient detail.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The senior leadership team has worked hard to make improvements to the quality of boarding. Lessons have been learned and clear action has been taken to improve the experiences of boarders and the wider student community.

The national minimum standard that was breached at the last inspection has been addressed. Shortfalls identified at the last inspection relating to the complaints policy and staff supervision have also been met. There have been distinct improvements in the school's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders. Improvements have been made in the regularity and quality of supervision and support provided to staff.

The senior leadership team has gone above and beyond expectations in their boarding offer. Children and families affected by crises have been exceptionally well supported. Such practice has resulted in positive change to boarders' experiences.

Governors have a new and improved oversight and connection with the boarding provision. The chair of governors is proactive in establishing and promoting this connection. This links to the headteacher's review and oversight of the boarding provision. This has led to improved governance of boarding.

The headteacher has provided valued support to the head of boarding via regular monitoring and review of the boarding provision.

The head of boarding has established good links with other boarding provisions. Her professional development ensures that she has a progressive outlook regarding how she can continue to develop boarding and further enhance boarders' experiences.

Senior leaders have made an impressive improvement in their consideration and support of the boarders' well-being and wide-ranging needs.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Points for improvement

- School leaders should ensure allegations are recorded with sufficient detail.
- School leaders should ensure that staff know what medicine boards have in their rooms and that medicines are stored safely and securely.
- School leaders should ensure that automatically closing fire doors are free from obstruction and that safety checks identify any actions that are required to prevent this occurrence.

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: John Russell

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors

Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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