

Felixstowe International College

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	935/6076
Unique Reference Number	124899
Social care URN	SC024579
Inspection number	322252
Inspection dates	8-9 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell
Social Care inspector	Joanne Vyas

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Inspection of social care (welfare) was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005. The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided and to inform the Secretary of State at the DCSF as to the school's continued suitability for registration as an independent school.

This report details whether the school meets the requirements for educational provision and outlines the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

Information about the school

Felixstowe International College is privately owned and situated in the suburbs of Felixstowe in Suffolk, where it was established in 1995. Registered for pupils between the ages of 7 and 17, it provides education currently for 11 boys and girls of aged 10 to 16. All pupils are boarders. In addition, three former pupils who are still below the age of 16 and who now attend local independent schools each day, also board at the school. The school admits pupils from overseas only, usually for one year, but occasionally for two years. Currently all pupils are from Korea. Four adult Korean students between the ages of 22 and 26 also attend the school as part of their English language preparation prior to taking up places at British universities, but these students were not the subject of this inspection. The school emphasises that its provision is strongly based on the Anglican faith. It states its aims as: *'to enable pupils to become fluent in English; to become familiar with English independent education; to give pupils the experience of living in a boarding community which has a family atmosphere'*. The school was last inspected by the Commission for Social Care in January, 2007 and by Ofsted in May, 2004.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education provided by Felixstowe International College is good and meets its aims. The pupils make good progress personally and academically because their curriculum experience is appropriately focused and teaching is good. Pupils make good progress in developing their abilities in English and older pupils do well in public examinations. The overall quality of boarding is inadequate because the school does not comply with all the required procedures and provision of documentation and does not meet National Minimum Standards. Nevertheless, pupils say that they are happy to attend the school. Pupils feel well cared for and appreciate the family atmosphere provided. They benefit from positive relationships with staff and with one another. Despite some improvements, the school has not yet addressed all the regulatory issues raised by the previous Ofsted inspection.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. The school's provision matches its aims well. An appropriately wide range of learning experiences and opportunities is provided for pupils which enables them to learn and make good progress in both their studies and their personal development. The curriculum provides pupils of all ages and aptitudes with good opportunities to develop their ability to speak English, to gain an understanding of British culture and to develop their experience of living as part of a community. The progress made by pupils is demonstrated by their development of skills in using English and the good results achieved by older pupils who take International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations in English and mathematics and the GCSE examination in science.

The curriculum is guided by a suitable policy, an appropriate range of documentation and schemes of work which support the good progress that pupils make during the various periods of time that they spend at the school. It provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. However, overall planning does not clearly reflect the aims of the school and how each aspect of the curriculum supports those aims.

All pupils study English, mathematics and science and all have a suitable course in personal, social and health education (PSHE), including careers, and all have good opportunities for physical education (PE). The programme of PSHE is supported by the wide range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences available to pupils. The very good range of additional activities provides effective support to pupils' development, for example through the course in Individual Development which includes the bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and which is taken by all. Drama is well chosen to encourage pupils to express themselves, including through the English language. Art classes encourage them to express themselves visually. All pupils take music and information technology, however they report that there are occasions when there are too few computers for all to have sufficient access. In most respects resources are appropriate to support teaching and learning. Overall, pupils' experiences whilst at Felixstowe International College prepare them well for adult life.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. During the inspection the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory, mostly good and occasionally it was outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well and this is supported by the small size of teaching groups. Teachers generally cope well with the frequently wide age range of pupils in the groups. Nevertheless, despite the strengths of teaching, subject teachers have not been provided with training in the techniques necessary to support pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue. In the best lessons observed, for example in drama, pupils were encouraged to express language and emotions through role play. Similarly, during a lesson in Individual Development pupils used role play to act out emergency situations that they might encounter when taking part in future 'expedition' activities as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. The effectiveness of some otherwise good teaching was diminished

on occasions when teachers had not been fully briefed on the level of English understood by individual pupils. Occasionally, teaching did not use questioning sufficiently effectively to draw pupils into the learning. In these lessons the teacher's exposition was too dominant and pupils were not challenged to contribute sufficiently.

Assessment is good because the strategies used work in practice. It is effective in supporting pupils' progress within the context of the school's curriculum provision and aims. Pupils say that they have regular feedback about their work through discussions with their teachers. Marking is very regular and demonstrates a number of strengths, such as the good use of praise and encouragement and the care that teachers take to write with clarity when providing written feedback. Nevertheless, the school does not provide teachers with guidance to ensure the consistency of assessment and marking practice. Given the number of teachers who are part-time, too much reliance is placed on word of mouth. Reporting is very regular and is often very effective in describing what pupils can do and what they must do to improve, but because of the lack of guidance provided its quality is not always consistent.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is central to the aims of the school. The learning opportunities and experiences provided for pupils are very effective in supporting their developing self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence, for example through Individual Development activities and drama. 'Encouragement' is a key word for the school and a strong feature of its aims and the practice observed by inspectors. Pupils unanimously say that they are happy to be at the school and show that they enjoy their education. The spiritual development of pupils reflects the Anglican basis of the school. Religious assemblies are taken by the chaplain each Monday morning, all pupils attend local church services and the younger ones are encouraged to attend a local Sunday school. Because they study English, learn to live in a community and to co-operate and to take responsibility for one another, pupils are well prepared for their future lives and economic well-being.

The behaviour of pupils is, without exception, outstanding. They attend well, are polite and, when encouraged appropriately, are very responsive to their teachers. Older pupils take ready responsibility for younger pupils through the established 'buddy' system. They support local charities and develop links with the local community, for example through contacts with other schools. Notably, several pupils have recently auditioned for a summer musical show at a local theatre. The school demonstrates very effective encouragement in this respect and is actively seeking other opportunities for similar community links. Through their links in the community and through visits pupils develop a very good understanding of British culture, public services and institutions and are supported in developing a clear understanding of the need for harmony and tolerance between different cultures and beliefs.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The quality of the welfare, health and safety of pupils is inadequate because the school does not comply with important aspects of the legal requirements relating to the care of pupils through its documentation and procedures. Despite this, pupils at the school report that they feel well cared for and safe. They are provided with a healthy diet and have good opportunities for physical activities. The family atmosphere which pervades all aspects of the pupils' education and experience at the school provides a strong component of the quality of care provided in practice. Most of the required policies relating to welfare are in place, but the school fails to give adequate attention to conducting checks on staff, issues relating to child protection and safeguarding procedures, the adequacy of fire protection and risk assessment in the school and for outside activities. These aspects are further developed in the section dealing with boarding at the end of this report. The school maintains an admission register appropriately and fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 through a three-year plan. Both aspects, the admission register and DDA policy, have been improved since the last inspection by Ofsted.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has not taken action on the matters of non-compliance with the regulations identified at the time of the last inspection in respect of undertaking staff checks. All the necessary checks of staff have not been completed and a single central register is not maintained as required.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are satisfactory; they are safe and conducive to learning. There are sufficient classrooms, with specialist accommodation for art. Pupils are able to use local facilities for sport, science and library sessions. The large common room provides a suitable venue for drama, music and other group activities. All classrooms are light and airy and are clean, colourful and welcoming. Public areas, including the entrance hall and dining room, are tastefully decorated and a variety of plants and ornaments ensure that pupils and visitors are made to feel at home.

Pupils' bedrooms are well equipped, clean, tidy and well maintained. The school grounds with grass areas and hard standing for games and physical activities are more than adequate to accommodate the small numbers of pupils at the school. An adjacent public sports centre provides a convenient location for PE and games and specialist facilities at a local independent school are used for practical science activities.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information is good. All information for parents and prospective pupils is accessible on the school website and a helpful parents' information pack contains key points of information in English, with a more detailed pack in Korean. The school provides brief weekly up-dates and reports at the end of each half term and then at the end of each term. The provision of information has been improved since the last inspection.

Procedures for handling complaints

Procedures for handling complaints meet requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement an appropriate written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DCSF guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- have appropriate regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (paragraph 3(3))
- provide risk assessments under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and by any report from the Fire Authority (paragraph 3(5)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff (including volunteers), ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references (paragraph 4(2)(a))

- ensure that an enhanced criminal record check has been made by the proprietor in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school and that the enhanced criminal record certificate which is the subject of the application was obtained before or as soon as was practicable after his/her appointment (paragraph 4(2)(b))
- ensure that in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of children for whom accommodation is provided, in addition to the requirements of paragraphs (a) to (d), a check has been made by the proprietor that Standard 38 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools is complied with (paragraph 4(2)(e))
- in relation to each member of staff in post on or after 1 August 2007, ensure that the register shows checks made (and certificates obtained where relevant) of: his/her identity; qualifications (where required); whether an enhanced CRB was obtained, or where appropriate, that he/she is not working in contravention of section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (List 99); the right to work in the UK and, where relevant for those who have lived outside the UK, suitability to work in a school; and compliance with the relevant National Minimum Standards where boarding accommodation is provided (paragraph 4C(2 and 3)).

Evaluation of boarding provision

The provision for being healthy is satisfactory. Pupils boarding at the school are provided with adequate health care. Staff are responsive to the emotional and health care needs of the pupils. Records of healthcare are provided by parents, which includes their consent for medical interventions. Pupils are registered with the local doctor and a school nurse visits as and when necessary. They have access to comprehensive information about health that is age appropriate through their PSHE classes.

The safe handling of medication is not well managed in this school and pupils are potentially at risk of harm. The policy on the safe handling of medication is limited. There is no audit of medication that is kept in the school or returned to the pharmacy. Homely remedies are not securely stored or agreed by a doctor. There are many different types of homely remedies stored and large stocks of Paracetamol and Ibuprofen. The number of pupils requiring this medication does not warrant the amount of medication stored. Some medication is out of date and it is not clear when creams and syrups, once opened, should be disposed of. The school have not provided staff with any training on the safe handling of medication. However, records of administration are appropriate. Medication that comes into the school from parents who are abroad is not used by the school but is stored and returned to the pupil when they leave. Accidents and injuries are appropriately treated and recorded. The boarding staff have a qualification in first aid.

The provision for staying safe is inadequate. Staff are concerned about keeping pupils safe. Pupils report that they feel safe at the school and are confident, happy and relaxed around staff. There is an adequate child protection policy in place, but this has not been approved by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to ensure consistency with their procedures. The designated child protection officer and senior management team have only had basic safeguarding children training and are not up to date with their knowledge in this area. Pupils, although they feel safe, are potentially not protected from harm at this school. All staff have received the same basic training on safeguarding children. However, there are good policies in place, implemented in practice, to safeguard pupils against bullying. Pupils state that bullying occurs rarely and is effectively dealt with by staff. There is a clear expectation of behaviour, which the pupils understand and follow. Sanctions are rarely used but are proportionate and appropriate. Pupils believe that rules and sanctions are fair and consistent. They also feel that their privacy is respected.

Pupils who board are clear about the fire evacuation procedures. Fire practices are carried out on a regular basis and at different times of the day. The checking of fire safety equipment is carried out. The school does not have a fire risk assessment in place although there has been a recent check of the building with regard to fire and all faults have been rectified.

There are no risk assessments written for indoor and outdoor areas of the school. Risk assessments for activities away from the school have been completed unsatisfactorily as they do not state who is at risk and how the risk can be minimised.

The recruitment practice of the school does not reflect their policy. All staff have a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure certificate but not necessarily one that has been provided for the school at the point of employment. The disclosure certificates that are provided are no longer valid due to the length of time that has elapsed since the certificate was produced. All other safety checks are carried out by the school. Pupils are, therefore, potentially at risk of harm.

The provision for enjoying and achieving is good. All pupils can approach a number of staff for help and support. They have met and know how to contact their independent listener. They do not experience inappropriate discrimination. There is a wide range of activities on offer for pupils who board throughout the week and at the weekend.

The provision for positive contribution is good. Pupils are given opportunities to express their views, particularly with regards to activities at the weekends. Pupils who board have opportunities to phone, fax or email their families. Pupils can contact their families at appropriate times but the phone which is for their use is housed in the common room and does not afford pupils adequate privacy. They have access to all appropriate telephone numbers such as the independent listener and Child Line. Pupils are confident in their relationships with staff.

The provision for economic wellbeing is good. The boarding accommodation is well maintained and decorated and furnished appropriately. There is a good amount of communal space available to pupils. All pupils have their own bedrooms, which are highly personalised.

The school's management does not make adequate arrangements for safeguarding pupils and therefore organisation is inadequate. However, the school provides a wide range of useful information about boarding to parents and pupils. Boarding staff are appropriately qualified but receive a limited induction and very little training is offered. Boarding staff feel well supported by their line managers but do not receive formal supervision or appraisal. Pupils are aware of the staff who are on duty and report that there is always sufficient staff on hand to meet their needs.

The management team are aware of issues at the school on a day to day basis. However, there are no formal monitoring systems in place for risk assessment, complaints, major punishments or accidents therefore trends may not be acknowledged and the welfare of pupils could be compromised.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- provide a written protocol on the provision of non-prescription 'household' medicines from a qualified medical or nursing professional for pupils (NMS 15.9)
- ensure all medication is kept secure (NMS 15.10)
- ensure the safe handling of medication (NMS 15)
- ensure the written safeguarding children policy is consistent with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures (NMS 3.2)
- provide appropriate training for the designated child protection officer and boarding staff (NMS 3.6)
- provide a fire risk assessment that complies with the local fire service recommendations (NMS 26.1)
- provide written risk assessments for identifiable high risk activities for pupils (NMS 29.2)
- provide written risk assessments to identify and reduce the risk to pupils from inherent hazards in the school buildings, activities or grounds (NMS 47.9)
- ensure all staff have a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Certificate provided for the school, prior to commencement of employment (NMS 38.7)
- provide pupils with private telephone facilities (NMS 19.3)
- provide all staff with boarding duties an induction programme, opportunities for further training and a regular review of their boarding practice (NMS 34.1)

- ensure records of risk assessment, major punishments, complaints and accidents are regularly monitored by the Head or a designated senior member of staff (NMS 23.2)

School details

Name of school	Felixstowe International College		
DCSF number	935/6076		
Unique reference number	124899		
Unique reference number (social care)	SC024579		
Type of school	International		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1995		
Age range of pupils	10-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 5	Total: 11
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 1	Total: 3
Number of boarders	Boys: 6	Girls: 8	Total: 14
Annual fees (boarders)	£19,500		
Address of school	Maybush Lane Felixstowe Suffolk IP11 7NA		
Telephone number	01394 282388		
Fax number	01394 276926		
Email address	felixic@rmplc.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr R Bloyce		
Proprietor	Mrs Jung Shil Lee		
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell		
Social care inspector	Joanne Vyas		
Dates of inspection	8-9 May 2008		