

Felixstowe International College

Maybush Lane, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 7NA

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Felixstowe International College is an independent boarding school, located in a residential area on the outskirts of Felixstowe. The boarding accommodation is in a designated house a short journey from the school. The college accommodates up to 45 students, aged nine to 19 years. At the time of the inspection, the college had 29 boarders and one day student. The last full inspection of the boarding provision was in November 2016.

Inspection dates: 17 to 19 April 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good

The boarding school is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement

Date of last inspection: 29 November 2016

Key findings from this inspection

This boarding school requires improvement to be good because:

- There are seven unmet national minimum standards (NMS) that affect young people's health and safety and comfort.
- Risk assessments do not consider all risks. The actions that are identified to reduce risks are not carried out.
- The school site has no heating system and the boarding accommodation is in need of refurbishment.
- Failings identified through health and safety checks in the boarding accommodation have not been addressed.
- The food choices are limited and food storage in boarding is not monitored.
- The recruitment procedures lack clear systems.
- The evening registration system leaves a period when staff do not know young people's exact whereabouts.
- The senior leaders fail to actively monitor the school.
- The work to address the previously identified shortfalls is slow.

The boarding school's strengths are:

- Young people feel safe at the school.
- Behaviour and conduct are impeccable.
- The relationships between the staff and the young people are a strength of the school.
- The impact of the boarding experience helps to develop well-adjusted young people who have high aspirations.
- The young people benefit from a strong sense of community and share the Christian ethos of the school.

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:

- Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders is 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 the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. (NMS 6.3)
- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. (NMS 7.1)
- All boarders, including those with special dietary, medical or religious needs, are provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality, choice and variety. (NMS 8.1)
- 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)

Recommendations

- Improve the evening registration system to ensure that young people's whereabouts are known.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Several recurring shortfalls have been identified at this school, particularly in regard to the environment. There has been delay in making the necessary improvements. Despite this, the young people make progress and enjoy being at the school.

The breakdown of the school's heating boiler in October 2017 has left the school site unacceptably cold. The classrooms are heated with portable electric heaters. Signs on classroom doors indicate to the staff which rooms should be heated and on which days. The communal areas and dining room are extremely cold and draughty. The environment is not warm enough for the young people to eat evening meals in.

Food is prepared by the chef, and by the boarding staff at the weekends. Weekday meals are cooked from fresh ingredients and include lighter savoury options; however, there are no alternatives to meat dishes. Although fresh fruit is provided

after lunch, the evening meal offers an unhealthy dessert and no healthier option. The fridge for young people in the boarding accommodation was found to contain out-of-date milk, fruit juice and an old item of fresh fruit. The staff have failed to check that the young people are storing food items hygienically. If consumed, these items could pose a health risk to the young people.

The young people apply to be prefects and applicants are informed that they are selected on more than their academic results. Prefects have regular meetings with the boarding staff. This provides a forum for the young people to air their views, discuss any concerns and develop their communication skills. The young people are responsible and self-regulating, they share a desire to work hard and reach their potential.

The school uses data to test academic progress and predict young people's grades. This process enables the staff to identify areas in which the young people require additional support. There is a system in place for continual analysis of predicted test results. There are a number of young people who achieve A* grades and gain admission to preferred university destinations. The school is aware that English language and interview skills are barriers for some of the young people applying for red-brick universities. The staff strongly encourage English speaking at all times to build young people's fluency and confidence.

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

Risk assessments are not comprehensive. Planned actions to reduce risks, such as monitoring the walking route to school, are rarely carried out. Factors that increase risks, such as additional site users arriving by car to use the sports field, are not included. The risk assessments fail to include all of the current risk factors. Additionally, portable appliance testing remains unfinished and a number of items in the kitchen of the accommodation have failed the test. Fire door surrounds have been fitted; however, these have not been certified as safe by the fire service. A number of the health and safety checks in the accommodation have not been satisfactorily undertaken, which means that potential hazards to the young people may go unchecked.

The pre-employment checks for new staff are not comprehensive and do not evidence safe recruitment practice. The school is conducting overseas checks on Korean staff but not European staff. There is no logical system of checking staff. It is unclear whether employment references are verified, and the number of reference requests for each staff member differs. This irregular system does not fully ensure the suitability of new staff and may place young people at risk of harm.

There is now a registration process for young people leaving and arriving at the boarding accommodation. A set walking route displayed on an information board in the school entrance gives clear instructions. However, the registration system provides little detail, and some young people fail to sign out properly. The system

fails to provide accurate information about the young people's times of arrival and departure. This lack of detail may compromise the safety of the young people when ascertaining their whereabouts in the event of a fire.

The young people say that they feel safe. They treat one another and staff with mutual respect. The young people can easily identify a number of staff to talk to. The wider staff team includes a counsellor, and the independent listener who regularly visits and makes herself known. These adults provide several options for young people who require pastoral support while away from home.

The school has no current issues with bullying. The young people are supportive and kind to one another; their conduct and behaviour is exemplary. There has been one racially aggravated incident outside the school in the local vicinity. Young people from another school shouted at the young people as they were walking back to their accommodation. The deputy principal contacted the headteacher of the other school and also talked to the young people during assembly about the demographics of the town and the need to report all incidents. There have been no further racially aggravated incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The day-to-day management of the boarding school is the responsibility of the deputy principal and deputy welfare principal. They are both qualified and experienced in their roles. They have an accurate knowledge of the school's shortfalls, although work to improve the standards of care is limited.

There is a lack of effective monitoring by the principal and the proprietor in regard to expenditure on repairs and refurbishment of the accommodation. The identified shortfalls have been raised repeatedly and have not been adequately addressed. The improvements are hindered by a lack of financial resources.

The management oversight of the school is ineffective; the proprietor and principal are rarely available. Their absence delays decision-making and therefore reduces the school's ability to improve.

The school has recently appointed an advisory monitoring visitor. The reports provide a critique and describe environmental shortfalls. Although the quality of the reviews has improved, the actions to address these shortfalls remains slow.

The admissions to the school have stalled. Student visas required for study are not awarded to schools who fail to achieve a 'good' inspection grading by Ofsted. This questions the long-term sustainability of the school. However, the low number of young people enables the staff to get to know the young people well and closely monitor their well-being.

The staff are established and long-serving. Despite diminished resources, the staff

strive to provide the best care possible. One staff member said, 'They [the young people] respect and nurture us as we do them. They need love and attention and we provide this. I love this job.'

The school works well with the parents, using electronic communication that considers the world time zones. Staff keep the parents fully aware of the young people's progress and any emerging concerns. Termly reports include a house report that describes demeanour and boarding conduct. The parents share the ethos of the school and are fully supportive of the school's aims. 100% of parents who responded to the school survey said that they would recommend the school to others.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC024579

Headteacher: Rev Seung Kim

Type of school: Boarding School

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Inspectors

Deirdra Keating: social care inspector

Sonia Hay: social care inspector



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