

Oxford International College, Brighton

Ovingdean Hall, Ovingdean, Greenways, Brighton BN2 7BA

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

The school is set in the outskirts of Brighton. It provides GCSE and A-level courses for students aged from 14 to 18 years; the majority of who are international students. The school has 170 boarding places. At the time of the inspection, 168 students were on roll at the school, with 159 students using the boarding provision.

The school uses the term students to describe those attending the school. This is reflected in this report.

The school opened in August 2023, and this is the first inspection. This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the school.

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 December 2023

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 previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the school opened, many students, from a variety of different countries, have been welcomed into the boarding provision. Staff, leaders, and students have all worked collaboratively to ensure that boarding feels like home.

Students have positive relationships with staff. They recognise trusted adults they can speak to regarding any concerns or worries and feel listened to. Staff are confident in their roles, despite it being a new school. They feel they have worked hard to gel as a team and make experiences positive for students. Staff say they have had the training they need, so far, to meet student's needs. They are confident in the school's process to follow should they have any concerns about students.

Staff appropriately and sensitively support student's health needs. Health and well-being needs are supported through students' ability to access the school nurse and school counsellor. Students are able to keep their medication and administer this independently once they have had a competency assessment with the school nurse.

Students have various ways of making their views known. Feedback is given regarding actions taken, either through student council, house captains or registration meetings. Concerns raised by students are listened to and staff advocate for these to be addressed. This feedback is well documented and monitored by leaders.

Students enjoy a wide range of activities in their free time that support their well-being. This includes a variety of sports, arts and time in the local community. Some students have joined local clubs and attend regularly. Students are given the opportunity for trips to the local city, the availability of this will expand as the school grows and staff team increases.

Staff support students to maintain positive relationships with each other, and deal with any conflict quickly and appropriately. Leaders communicate effectively with families. Parents feel well informed regarding any issues relating to their child and are satisfied with responses from staff.

Students have made a positive impact in the local community by attending local events. For instance, turning on the local Christmas lights and remembrance Sunday celebrations.

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

The safeguarding culture in the school is strong. A team of deputy designated safeguarding leads, led by an experienced and passionate designated safeguarding lead, have ensured that expectations and awareness of what makes a safe school is

understood. Students understand and respond to this as they are aware who they need to talk to if they have any concerns.

Risks for students are well understood by staff. When there are changes in students' behaviour or increases in risk, guidance is updated and shared with all staff. This has had positive outcomes for students and, in some instances, has resulted in a reduction in behavioural concerns.

Staff manage behaviour well. When concerns are raised these are immediately shared through online reporting systems. Leaders have oversight of this and make quick and appropriate decisions to minimise risks to students. When necessary, communication is shared with local safeguarding agencies. The designated safeguarding lead is rigorous in following up matters when needed. All incidents of concern are shared with parents to ensure that they know their children are safe. Parents report how reassured they are with this level of communication.

There are robust safer recruitment strategies in place. They involve two stages of interviews, including a focused and detailed safeguarding discussion. However, for one applicant further exploration regarding gaps in employment was required and how references were verified was not clear.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders have high expectations for all students. There is a strong extracurricular aspect of the school where students can continue to learn in their own free time.

A dedicated head of boarding has a good knowledge of the students and ensures that he can prioritise those who have different or increased needs. The head of boarding has clear aspirations and has worked hard to ensure that there is a variety of different activities available to students. He is in the process of developing more access to off-site activities but in the interim provides a series of onsite alternatives.

Staff have the mandatory training they require to meet the needs of students and ensure safety in the boarding houses. In addition, more specific training, regarding supporting students in boarding provision, is planned.

As all staff are new to the school, they have been monitored through the probation process with regular reviews. Supervision takes place termly, moving to half termly once probation is passed. The process links to staff annual appraisals to further monitor and enhance their progress and professional development.

Senior leaders receive regular and robust monitoring visits from the governing body. A governor is allocated to oversee safeguarding and the boarding provision. This supports leaders in having a 'critical friend' to provide oversight, ongoing support and challenge. Students have access to an independent visitor to ensure that there is someone outside of the school who they can talk to.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- School leaders should ensure that safer recruitment records demonstrate the robust actions that are taken through interview and recruitment processes.

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: 2713058

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Tess St. Clair-Ford

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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