

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 912 pupils aged from 11 to 18, including 376 boarders.

The children in boarding accommodation are situated 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 2025.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 November 2025

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.

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 8 February 2023

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who reside in the boarding provision benefit from positive and purposeful relationships with staff, who demonstrate a thorough understanding of their individual needs. Staff are highly skilled. They provide consistent emotional support and nurturing care to the children. They act as effective role models, and their calm, professional interactions contribute to a settled environment. Consequently, children are happy, they feel secure, and they make sustained progress.

A deep sense of pride resonates among the children who stay in the boarding provision. They speak positively about the quality of education and the support they receive. Comparative data indicates that the children in the boarding accommodation achieve higher exam results than the day students, highlighting the positive impact of the boarding provision. One child said, 'I cannot thank the boarding staff enough for helping me to make the progress I have [and for] the opportunities I have received. And they are helping me to grow into a better version of myself.'

Student–tutor meetings play a role in fostering strong trusting relationships within the boarding house. These sessions provide a consistent space for open dialogue and personal reflection and tailored support, helping students feel listened to and valued. Through these interactions, the tutors gain deep insight into each student's well-being and progress, enabling them to provide meaningful guidance and encouragement.

Staff ensure that children enjoy positive and enriching experiences during their stays in the boarding provision, with a wealth of opportunities for engagement and activities with peers and staff. The staff make excellent use of both the resources in the school and those available in the wider community in order to create meaningful and enjoyable experiences. A diverse range of activities is offered, supporting children in developing social skills, independence and confidence. These experiences also foster a stronger sense of identity, belonging and connection to their community. As a result, children build friendships, grow in self-assurance and create lasting memories that enhance their overall boarding experience.

Children are provided with healthy and balanced meal choices and encouraged to participate in regular physical activities, promoting both their physical and mental well-being. A dedicated health centre on the school premises provides comprehensive support for all aspects of the children's health. Designated health care staff also provide all staff with training and information that will support them in their role of working with the children. Additionally, a doctor visits the school twice a week, offering direct support to children or to make a referral for additional support. This allows children's health needs to be prioritised and addressed promptly.

The independent person offers an important layer of support and advocacy for children in the boarding provision as an approachable adult outside the immediate

school staff. This provides boarders with a safe space to share concerns, seek guidance or simply chat. This ensures that children's voices are heard and that their rights and well-being are actively promoted.

There is a real focus on equality, diversity and inclusion as a school. Children come from different parts of the world, and they have a positive forum in which to share their heritage and culture. Staff ensure that children are provided with many opportunities to explore different cultures through a variety of means. The children actively participate in many cultural activities arranged for them, and staff encourage them to research, learn and enhance their own knowledge.

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

Safeguarding underpins every aspect of school life. All staff are trained and equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills relating to safeguarding children. Staff receive ongoing updates and shared insights so as to maintain the good standards of safeguarding practice.

There is a clear and proactive multi-agency approach to keeping children safe. Children are provided with consistent and reliable daily routines and structure. Staff provide emotional warmth and understanding. This supports children to feel protected and secure. Children say they feel safe and happy within boarding. One child said, 'I feel like we can achieve whatever we set our hearts and minds on, knowing staff will support us every step of the way.'

Children's individual risk assessments capture their risks and vulnerabilities. The level of detail recorded shows how well staff know each child. Managers and staff regularly review risk assessments and update them if circumstances warrant it. As a result, staff have up-to-date information about each child and the best way to respond to their needs and to risks when they arise, enabling them to keep children as safe as possible.

When there have been incidents, staff have followed the reporting process. Referrals have been made with the relevant agencies and advice or support requested. Staff ensure that parents remain updated about what action they have taken. Children are spoken with while investigations are ongoing, and their well-being is always a consideration for staff. Restorative actions have been taken when necessary to ensure that relationships between children are repaired.

Managers respond, in accordance with guidance, to any allegations against staff or complaints. Records of investigations show a thorough approach to managing concerns. When allegations have been made, managers work with safeguarding partners to ensure that all information is shared, and investigations take place. Staff are also supported throughout this process. This process ensures that children are protected.

Leaders take allergies very seriously and have established robust systems to manage any child with an allergy. This includes a team around the child approach, including

house staff, healthcare professionals and the catering team. Additionally, leaders are committed to educating children on how to stay safe and take responsibility for managing their own allergies.

There is a robust medication process in place. When medication errors have occurred, the manager has been quick to investigate each incident. Changes to practice have been implemented to avoid reoccurrence. Consequently, the likelihood of further errors is minimised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There have been significant changes in the leadership team since the last inspection. A new principal has been appointed alongside a new director of boarding. Together, they form a dynamic and effective leadership team with strategic oversight of the boarding provision and a clear, purposeful agenda aimed at enhancing outcomes for children.

Their shared vision is consistently communicated to staff, fostering alignment and commitment across the team. United in their approach, they are driving meaningful improvements with a strong focus of excelling in the care they provide for children, creating an environment where children can thrive and achieve their full potential.

Staff speak positively about the recent changes to the management and leadership structure. They feel comfortable sharing their views openly and they believe that their opinions are both supported and respected. They feel valued by the leadership team and express genuine enjoyment in their roles, with high levels of job satisfaction. As a result, many staff members have remained in their positions for a significant period. This stability contributes to high staff morale and ensures that children benefit from consistent care provided by staff who know them well.

The management team uses a combination of internal and external quality assurance processes. This leads to a well-rounded and objective understanding of the strengths and areas for growth in the boarding provision. This valuable insight informs strategic planning, enabling them to drive improvement and ensure that the school consistently enhances its services.

The manager provides new staff with a comprehensive induction programme. This combines both in person and online training. This foundation is reinforced through regular team meetings and supervision sessions, which support staff in developing their skills and confidence to undertake their jobs well. The manager also prioritises recruiting individuals who are committed to helping children reach their full potential, ensuring that all team members align with the organisation's vision and values.

The governor acts as a valued, yet critical, friend to the school. He undertakes focused visits, where he thoroughly explores all issues. If he finds any concerns, he is quick to raise these and seek a resolution and a positive outcome for all at the school.

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: SC061728

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Alasdair Mackenzie

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors

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