

# Education and boarding inspection summary for Oxford International College

1-5 London Place, Oxford OX4 1BD

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Inspection dates: 16 to 18 April 2024

## **Outcome**

The education overall effectiveness judgement is: inadequate

The judgement for the experiences and progress of children in the boarding provision is: inadequate

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

- Most pupils who attend this school are from overseas, aiming to gain qualifications to secure places at British universities. The education they receive here does not prepare them for life in modern Britain. Students in the sixth form, which makes up most of the school, do not receive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. This means that they do not learn about topics such as drugs, alcohol and online safety. In addition, sixth-form students do not receive adequate relationships and sex and health education (RSE). In addition, the school's arrangements for safeguarding are not effective and this has left some pupils at risk of harm.
- Pupils achieve well academically at this school. Many go on to their chosen universities in the United Kingdom or abroad. Pupils are highly motivated, and their teachers encourage them to aim high. Pupils attend school regularly and behave well.
- Pupils have the opportunity to access a range of clubs during the school day, such as philosophy and coding, where they can pursue their interests. Some pupils have recently established a chess and mah-jong group, where they enjoy competing with each other. Pupils are encouraged to stay healthy, for example, by accessing local sports and leisure facilities, although not all participate in these activities.

The inspectors made **three recommendations** to help the school improve, covering the school's safeguarding culture and practices, leadership oversight and the personal development provision for students in the sixth form.

The school **does not meet the independent school standards** relating to quality of education provided; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; welfare, health and safety of pupils; provision of information; and quality of leadership and management in schools.

## What is it like to board at this school?

- A poor safeguarding culture places children at risk of harm. Staff report feeling ill-equipped to support students in terms of their emotional health and mental health needs. Students and staff raise concerns that the regime and routines in the school and boarding are onerous and leave little opportunity for rest and recreation. In addition, there are insufficient staff to provide good care, supervision and support to boarding students.
- Students make academic progress. However, staff expressed concerns that students are under excessive pressure to study for many hours a day, meaning that they often spend their one day of rest, sleeping in their bedrooms. Students say leisure opportunities are limited, and clubs and activities are an extension of their academic studies. This means students have little opportunity to rest and have fun outside of the school's curriculum.
- Staff responsible for the welfare of students are proactive in providing and advocating in-house counselling, nursing and pastoral care for students. However, these internal services are extremely stretched, and access to external clinicians, including private assessments, is significantly delayed. For example, one student waited two years for a clinical assessment.
- Staff do not help students to learn about sexual health, positive relationships or how to stay safe. This puts students, many of whom are from overseas and away from their families, at risk of exploitation. When students have asked for help, managers have appropriately supported them with external services, resources and advice. However, this help is often when students have already found themselves at risk, and there is a lack of proactive support and education to help students make safer choices and avoid situations that place them at risk of harm.
- The quality and provision of staff training are poor. Most staff training is completed online and staff do not feel equipped to meet specific student needs such as mental health, depression and autism.
- There is no independent person and students do not access any external advocacy services. This creates the opportunity for the development of a closed culture, where children have no means of raising worries or concerns with someone who is independent of the school. In addition, there is no student boarding council or similar forum to enable leaders and managers to understand

or respond to the lived experiences of students in the boarding provision. Some students do feel listened to and they spoke positively about managers purchasing a new television and ping-pong table.

- The majority of children spoken to and those who responded to the 'point in time' survey commented on the poor quality of the food provided. Many students order regularly from take-away facilities or cook basic food that lacks nutrition and variety. This was observed each evening by inspectors across the boarding houses.

The school **does not meet the national minimum standards for boarding schools** relating to management and development of boarding; boarding accommodation; boarders' health and wellbeing; safeguarding; boarders' induction and individual support; complaints; promoting good relationships; activities and free time; staff recruitment checks on other adults; and staffing and supervision.

The inspectors made **four recommendations** to help the school improve, covering safeguarding, boarders' health and wellbeing and the process for boarders to raise a complaint.

- View the full inspection report for the education provision:  
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/27/146516>
- View the full inspection report for the boarding provision:  
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/1/1257929>



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