

Cardiff Sixth Form College

89 Regent Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB2 1AW

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Cardiff Sixth Form College is an independent boarding school located in the centre of Cambridge. The school can accommodate up to 39 boarding pupils. At the time of the inspection, 20 pupils were boarding at the school.

The school registered with the Department for Education in May 2022. The head of boarding has been in post since the school registered and is suitably experienced. The inspector only inspected the boarding provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 27 February to 1 March 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Pupils enjoy boarding at this school. They build positive relationships with staff and enjoy spending time with them. Pupils are highly ambitious and recognise how boarding is helping them to achieve their ambitions. Pupils have made good progress and have become more confident and independent since they started boarding.

Staff help pupils to build and maintain positive peer relationships. The staff work hard to promote a positive and inclusive culture at this new school. This has helped pupils, who come from diverse backgrounds, to establish relationships based on mutual respect. Staff are alert to potential issues between pupils, which helps to ensure that they can identify any tensions and manage them effectively.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities available to them in the local community. Links have been established with Cambridge University and local companies. Pupils attend events in the local community, and they learn from and meet experts in professions they wish to enter. One child has been able to secure work experience in a highly competitive industry. Another child is carrying out a scientific project alongside academics at the university. These experiences are providing pupils with opportunities that are unique to the community the school is in.

Some recreational activities have been made available to pupils. Pupils enjoy taking part in these. However, opportunities in these areas are limited, with staff aware of the need to expand these further. Pupils say that they would like to have more opportunities to engage in a variety of activities.

The school has a strong focus on pupils' academic achievement. This naturally leads to pressure on pupils to achieve, which can lead to increased stress levels. Staff have provided pupils with additional support when needed. Pupils say that they feel well supported that there has always been help available to them from staff at times when they have struggled.

Leaders have worked hard to develop an identity and culture at the school since it opened. They have involved pupils in this, as well as ex-pupils from the school's sister school who now attend Cambridge University. Each pupil has now been allocated a student mentor who previously attended the sister school. Mentors have a good level of understanding of pupils' experiences. They provide advice and support for pupils and act as role models in terms of further educational achievements. Pupils are encouraged to think about their futures, which is helping to create a culture where pupils feel committed to the school.

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

Pupils feel safe in boarding. Their behaviour is excellent, there are no incidents of bullying, discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour between pupils. Staff provide

pupils with clear expectations in relation to behaviour and boundaries, and they respond well to these. When there have been very minor behavioural incidents, these have been fairly and quickly addressed, which reinforces the clear expectations for pupils.

Staff take appropriate action when safeguarding concerns arise. When one pupil was experiencing some health concerns, staff responded quickly to ensure that they received appropriate treatment. A clear risk assessment was put in place to ensure that risks were managed effectively. When there were some concerns in relation to a child's diet, these were quickly identified by staff and shared appropriately. The concerns were discussed with the pupil's parent and a plan was put in place to ensure that the pupil received the support they needed.

Some practice concerns have been raised in relation to the conduct of two staff members. On one occasion, these were addressed appropriately with the staff member by the head of boarding. The staff member was given appropriate support to help them to develop their practice. However, the concern was not recorded on the school's low-level concern record, which means that any future patterns of concern may not be identified. On the other occasion, staff appropriately reported the concerns, and, at the time of the inspection, managers were in the process of dealing with them. However, there were no records of the concerns raised, which means that there was not a clear timeline of the concerns and actions that had been taken in response.

Managers have clear processes in place for the recruitment of staff. Checks are thorough and any identified concerns are followed up as necessary to ensure that staff are suitable.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are suitably experienced. They have a good understanding of the school's progress and achievements since opening, as well as the areas for development. As a new provision, leaders and managers have limited the number of pupils. This has allowed staff the time to get to know pupils well, while getting used to their new roles.

Staff say that they feel well supported by managers. Managers provide a visible presence, which has enabled them to build positive relationships with pupils. Managers develop a good understanding of staff's strengths and areas where they need additional support. Staff have one-to-one meetings with the head of boarding, where staff consider how pupils are being cared for. These meetings are used to identify the development needs of staff and the actions required to ensure that these are met.

Leaders and managers have good oversight of the boarding provision. They have effective monitoring systems in place. Governors provide a visible presence and

effective oversight. There are clear systems in place to report to governors, which enables them to provide additional scrutiny of the care provided.

Staff are provided with a clear induction programme. This includes a wide range of training which helps staff to develop the skills and knowledge that they need to provide good levels of care for pupils.

Leaders and managers actively seek pupils' views. Pupils have been involved in setting up the student leadership council and have elected five representatives. Issues raised by students are taken forward by the council, and pupils say that there have been some improvements as a result. In addition, pupil surveys are carried out regularly. Feedback from surveys is closely reviewed by managers, who respond to areas pupils have identified for improvement. A strong pupil voice helps to ensure that pupils feel valued and that their views are important.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve? Recommendations

- School leaders should ensure that clear records are made of any concerns relating to staff practice and that these are recorded as low-level concerns when appropriate.
- School leaders should ensure that children are offered a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

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: 2689127

Headteacher: Julian Davies

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspector

Joe Matkar-Cox, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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