



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Abbey College, Malvern

December 2021

Contents

School's Details	3
1. Background Information	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection	5
Preface	5
Key findings	6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided	6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils	6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	7
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools	7
PART 6 – Provision of information	7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	8
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	8
3. Inspection Evidence	9

School's Details

College	Abbey College		
DfE number	885/6026		
Address	Abbey College 253 Wells Road Malvern Wells Worcestershire WR14 4JF		
Telephone number	01684 892300		
Email address	enquiries@abbeycollege.co.uk		
Principal	Mr Daniel Booker		
Proprietor	Mr Hekmat Kaveh		
Age range	14 to 19		
Number of pupils on roll	31		
	Day pupils	1	Boarders 30
	Seniors	18	Sixth Form 13
Inspection dates	30 November to 2 December 2021		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Abbey College is an independent co-educational boarding school for pupils aged between 14 and 19. The school was established on its present site in 1979 and caters for international pupils, offering GCSE, A-level and pre-university courses. For almost all pupils, their first language is not English. The school is established as a limited company, owned and managed by the proprietor. Since the previous inspection, an advisory board has been established to provide an additional level of scrutiny and challenge to school leaders and a new principal has been appointed.
- 1.2 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school was closed.
- 1.3 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.4 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.5 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.6 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than vulnerable pupils or the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home. Overseas boarders that did not return home received remote learning at the home of their parents or guardians.
- 1.7 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades were awarded in 2020 and teacher-assessed grades were awarded in 2021.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.8 The school aims to foster a community of international understanding and shared values in which overseas students receive the quality of academic education, and support in English language, which will enable them to succeed and progress to higher education.

About the pupils

- 1.9 Almost all pupils are overseas boarders from a wide range of countries, and for whom English is a second language. English as an additional language (EAL) support is offered to all these pupils by specialist teachers. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or has been identified as having a special educational need and/or disability (SEND). Data used by the school have identified five pupils as being more able in mathematics, and the curriculum is modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2020 to 2021, results confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2020 to 2021 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 Bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained.
- 2.11 The school does not maintain a central record of sanctions imposed for serious misbehaviour in order to identify any patterns of misbehaviour. The school does not ensure an adequate level of staff supervision of boarders and does not have a robust system for pupils to sign in and out. The standard on staffing and supervision (NMS 15) is not met and represents a failure to safeguard boarders. As a result, safeguarding arrangements do not always demonstrate due regard to current statutory guidance.
- 2.12 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal**

punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 and NMS 2–4, 6–10 and 16 are met, but that those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding], 8 [safeguarding of boarders], 9 [behaviour], 14 [supervision] and, for the same reasons, NMS 11, 12 and 15 are not met.

Action point 1

The school must ensure that it promotes good behaviour by keeping a record of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour which is sufficiently systematic to enable patterns of misbehaviour to be identified [paragraphs 8(a) and (b) and 9; NMS 12.1 and 12.2].

Action point 2

The school must ensure that sufficient staff are deployed to supervise boarders to ensure their health, safety and welfare at all times [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b) and paragraph 14; NMS 11.1, 15.3–15.5 and 15.8].

Action point 3

The school must implement a robust system for pupils to sign in and out so that staff know the whereabouts of pupils at all times [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b) and paragraph 14; NMS 11.1, 15.3–15.5 and 15.8].

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.13 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.14 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.15 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.16 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.17 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.18 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.19 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.20 **The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.21 The proprietor has not ensured that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent schools and boarding standards are consistently met. The leadership and management do not promote the well-being of pupils by failing to ensure an adequate level of staff supervision of boarders and by failing to implement effectively the school's set procedures for behaviour management.
- 2.22 **The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 and NMS 13 are not met.**

Action point 4

The school must ensure that leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met consistently, and pupils' well-being is actively promoted [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.1–13.5 and 13.7–13.9].

3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house meetings. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Stephen Holliday

Reporting inspector

Mr David Lloyd

Compliance team inspector (Head, HMC school)

Mrs Emma Custodios

Boarding team inspector (Head of Boarding, GSA school)