

Harrow House International College

Harrow Drive, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1PE

| Inspection dates | 1–3 December 2015 |
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| Overall effectiveness | Outstanding |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Outstanding |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Outstanding |
| Sixth form provision | Outstanding |
| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision | Outstanding |
| Quality of care and support in the boarding provision | Outstanding |
| How well children and young people are protected in the boarding provision | Outstanding |
| Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected by Ofsted |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Pupils make rapid progress despite arriving with very limited knowledge of English. They are highly successful and gain accreditation in English and a range of GCSE and, for the most-able, A-level examinations. Teachers have very high aspirations for pupils and are highly skilled in supporting them.
- Modern and well-equipped residential facilities combine with very effective educational resources to create an exceptionally rewarding experience.
- The pupils are all highly motivated and committed to academic success. They adjust quickly to leaving their families and home countries, growing in maturity and confidence.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable and they develop extremely positive relationships.
- Pupils feel safe and extremely well supported. This reflects the very positive working relationships and practice between education and residential staff.
- Leaders, including directors, hold staff to account but also lead by example. This has led to the development of a strong and committed staff team which has created very strong provision.
- Leaders understand the strength and weaknesses of the college very well. However, they have not yet undertaken an evaluation of specific successes and areas for development for the International Academic Semester programme. As a result they are not yet able to identify priorities for its future development.
- Leaders are vigilant in ensuring that the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for residential schools are all fully met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule for The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements and the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Undertake a detailed evaluation of the International Academic Semester programme to enable the college leaders to identify areas for further development in future programmes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision is outstanding

How well children and young people are protected in the boarding provision is outstanding

- The directors, headteacher and residential leaders work together very effectively to ensure that all the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools are met in full. Leaders make good use of inspections and audits to ensure that provision is of the highest quality.
- Leaders expect high-quality teaching and support to be the norm and are highly ambitious for the college and its pupils. They lead by example and promote exceptional team work and positive commitment from staff. Pupils achieve extremely well across the whole range of subjects they study but the primary focus is on gaining skills in English. Leaders have appointed a very effective team of well-qualified staff.
- Staff take care to ensure that each pupil is able to succeed, reflecting the strong commitment to equality of opportunity throughout every aspect of life at college.
- Leaders monitor most aspects of college life in close detail, ensuring that pupils gain a wide range of valuable learning experiences throughout their time at the college. Leaders encourage and support staff to be active participants in this process, and each has an individual development plan to support their professional development.
- Leaders have a well-established system for staff appraisal and professional development, including annual performance objectives. Directors dedicate financial resources to support an effective programme of staff training and development. This programme covers whole-college needs as well as supporting individual staff to develop specific areas of expertise.
- Very effective self-evaluation is a sign of the reflective nature of the college. It was from this that the various components of existing practice have been brought together and dovetailed into the recently introduced International Academic Semester programme. However, there has not yet been a focused evaluation of the specific successes and areas for development of this programme.
- Courses taken by pupils within the programme are primarily and successfully focused on the acquisition of English skills. All programmes also include a study of mathematics, science and computing. Leaders go to great lengths to accommodate pupils' requests and have devised a range of additional options which create broad and balanced programmes for individual pupils. These options include a link with a local secondary school that enables pupils to follow courses up to GCSE and A level in a mainstream setting if the college cannot provide the course required.
- The wider curriculum includes a wide range of trips and visits which aim to bring classroom learning to life by enabling pupils to see at first hand things that have been covered in class. For example, local places and landmarks associated with the writing of Thomas Hardy are visited, while the local 'Jurassic Coast' world heritage site is used effectively to support hands-on learning. Residential staff provide a wide range of evening activities which complement classroom studies and create excellent recreational opportunities. Through these and other activities, the curriculum is very effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Safeguarding is exemplary and the college has developed effective links with the local safeguarding children's board, which supports training. All staff support pupils in creating an atmosphere where they feel safe and they are safe. This approach actively promotes the welfare of pupils, who say that their concerns are always listened to. They value the role played by the liaison officer, with whom they identify closely. In addition there is an independent visitor available to pupils.
- Wider links with other professional institutions, such as surgeries and pharmacies and with social care teams, all seek to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff, educational and residential, are fully aware of the government requirements to identify any pupil who might be vulnerable to radicalisation.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Directors are fully involved with every aspect of college life on a day-to-day level, and remain very well informed as a result of a weekly meeting of the finance director with heads of department. Outcomes from this meeting are reported to directors, which ensures that those responsible for governance have a clear understanding of the provision being made in the college and the ways in which the quality of teaching and residential provision impacts on the life of pupils. Directors set

challenging objectives for heads of departments, the headteacher and the college manager. Directors have a clear understanding of the appraisal arrangements for the staff. Directors have undertaken safeguarding and safer recruitment training and have an excellent understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They are also directly responsible for the financial standing of the college, and care is taken to ensure that investment in resources and training support the high quality of provision that is seen throughout.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- A dedicated and highly effective team of teachers supports the rapid progress that pupils make from the outset. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, either as teachers of English as a foreign language, or as subject teachers covering the wider range of subjects taught within the course.
- High-quality teaching is based on teachers' effective, detailed planning and supports the needs of every pupil in a class very well. Every pupil has an individual learning plan that is monitored regularly in one-to-one discussions with the academic manager. Staff set clear and measurable targets for pupils' academic achievement, which promote rapid progress.
- In lessons, questioning is used very effectively to create stimulating and challenging discussion. At the same time it enables teachers to know how well pupils understand the topic and to check that a lack of specific vocabulary is not restricting learning. It also enables the pupils to demonstrate their whole-hearted commitment to learning English.
- Language teachers are very skilled in the specific skills of teaching English as a foreign language.
- All teachers ensure that they regularly check on pupils' understanding and progress throughout lessons.
- Every piece of assessed work is marked in line with college policy. This notes the quality of the piece of work, the effectiveness of the English used and what could be done to improve it. Pupils say they find this extremely helpful and supportive in helping their academic progress and outcomes.
- Formal homework undertaken during the evening is well supported by residential staff at the homework club.
- Staff are highly committed and motivated by the desire to see their pupils do very well. In return, the pupils show a thirst for knowledge and make rapid progress in their acquisition of English and in their wider studies. Regular assessments give teachers a clear picture of each pupil's progress. Teachers push pupils hard academically within an extremely supportive environment. Pupils are always aware of the progress they are making and value the opportunities to discuss their targets and progress in the regular meetings each of them has with the academic manager. In addition, detailed written reports are compiled at each of the two semesters for pupils and their parents.
- Teachers promote a 'can-do' attitude which helps to create a happy learning environment where it is fine to 'have a go' even if the answer is wrong. As a result pupils become very resilient learners as they are not defeated easily even if they do not succeed immediately.
- There are extremely positive relationships between staff and pupils throughout the whole college.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- When pupils first arrive they are generally able to speak and understand comparatively little English. Their rapid progress enables them to become confident and self-assured learners. Excellent support from educational and residential staff, who work together in a fully integrated way, enables pupils to quickly grow in self-confidence and maturity.
- Each pupil brings their own perspective of the world from their own culture and everyone is treated with dignity and respect. There is a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and ensuring that there is no discrimination.
- Strong links have been developed with the sixth form of a local school. Local school pupils act as mentors for newly arrived pupils. The pairings are worked out carefully by the college and school staff to ensure compatibility, and friendships quickly develop.
- Pupils' personal development is strongly supported through the encouragement they receive to participate in a range of local activities, such as sports clubs. In addition, they visit local primary schools and care

homes for older people. They welcome the opportunity to talk about their own countries and cultures, making a positive contribution to international understanding and the local community.

- Since pupils are only in Britain for a relatively short time, the careers advice they receive is focused around educational opportunities prior to their return home. If pupils wish to pursue their studies further they are supported in applying for a place in higher education in Britain.
- Pupils learn a lot about British values and culture in timetabled lessons. They meet a range of local uniformed service personnel. For example, the police come in to run an e-safety course for pupils. The residential element of the programme helps to develop pupils' understanding of the British way of life.
- All staff have been trained in their duty to identify pupils at risk of radicalisation and great care is taken to ensure that extremist opinions are not promoted by anyone concerned with the programme in any way.
- Pupils are given strong support to develop their understanding of a healthy lifestyle. Catering staff provide nutritional meals that reflect styles of food from around the world. A wide range of sports and leisure facilities are available on the site, which are very well used by the pupils, and by the local pupils with whom they buddy when they first arrive. If a pupil has an interest or activity that cannot be supported on site, staff go to great lengths to find local provision.
- Safeguarding arrangements are exemplary and pupils feel safe, being well supported by caring and enthusiastic staff throughout the whole day.
- Attendance is very high because the pupils are so well motivated. There is exceptional support and care provided by the residential staff, especially the matron, for any pupil who is taken ill.
- Careful attention is paid to ensuring that policies and procedures relating to first aid, pupils who are taken ill, and health and safety are implemented very effectively. All necessary safety checks and risk assessments are carried out to ensure full compliance with legal duties, and are logged impeccably.
- The maintenance of the college and all its facilities is of a high standard.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They become extremely self-motivated. There is a strong commitment to being successful and gaining the most from their experience of living in Britain. They are strongly supported by all the staff to achieve these goals. There is always someone to whom pupils can turn for help or support, including the student liaison officer.
- There is a clear behaviour policy and pupils are made aware of this during the initial induction programme when they first arrive. The very few incidents that have arisen are logged in an incidents book. There are clear sanctions for breaking the code of behaviour. However, as behaviour is excellent, these sanctions are very rarely required. In lessons, pupils are totally committed to being successful in their studies. This enables them to make rapid progress and to gain success in learning English and in their wider study programmes.
- The boarding experience enables pupils to gain from a wide range of experiences throughout the whole day that engage and support them very effectively. They develop socially and emotionally, and as a group, pupils collectively display a maturity and confidence as a result of living and working together for the duration of their course.
- Relationships between pupils are very positive, so that bullying is simply not an issue. Staff ensure that pupils are aware of social risks that they might encounter, and that they are aware of the risks of misusing the internet and social networking sites.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Pupils bring such a wide range of experiences, ideas and cultures that they learn a lot from each other, as well as gaining a deeper understanding of life in Britain.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils make rapid progress from their individual starting points. They soon gain accreditation from their success in the Cambridge University Language tests. These lead incrementally to accreditation comparable with A level. Pupils also aspire to success in their wider learning and make rapid progress towards gaining success in a range of GCSE courses, including mathematics.
- An initial analysis of pupils' levels of learning and their understanding of English and wider studies when pupils first arrive is used to provide a baseline. Pupils are placed into appropriate groupings for their studies and a detailed individual learning plan is developed by the academic director. This is reviewed regularly and one-to-one discussions between individual pupils and the academic director ensure that there is enough challenge and rigour to enable pupils to maximise their progress throughout the year.

- There are currently no disabled pupils and none with special educational needs. Similarly, none can be identified as disadvantaged. Those who are identified as the most able are given very strong support through the carefully individualised nature of the learning programmes. Pupils successfully complete courses up to A level and, if they choose to continue further with their education in Great Britain, are supported in working towards gaining a place in higher education.
- The careful analysis of pupils' achievement shows the rapid progress being made by all pupils. It also shows there is no difference between the progress of identified groups, such as males and females.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps. For the vast majority, this will mean a return to their own countries having gained fluency in their ability to speak English, together with success in exams that have international credibility.

Sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Since the programme is available to pupils between the ages of 15 and 17, some will fall into the category of sixth form pupils. However, there is no difference in the teaching, learning or any other element of the courses once a pupil reaches this point. There is, therefore, no specific, discrete sixth form provision that is different in any way from other provision.
- Since the provision is made for the whole group, and the pupils themselves have little or no understanding of the nature of British year-grouping in schools, the reporting and outcomes for these pupils is exactly the same as that for those who are pre-sixth form.
- The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. All the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools are met. Very successful programmes of study prepare pupils for future employment through their success in gaining English language and wider accreditation. Pupils' commitment is reflected in the 100% retention rate.
- Careers advice supports pupils in helping them gain the most from their experience of study in the United Kingdom, so they can return home well prepared for their next steps.
- Every pupil, through their individualised learning programmes, is challenged to fulfil their potential. Staff, both teaching and residential, are strongly committed to the success of the pupils. They arrive with very limited English and away from home and family and when they leave they are self-confident and mature learners who have gained a range of accreditation that is valued in their home country.
- Pupils feel safe and are safe because of the care they receive from very well-trained staff, who are kept up to date with their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding. They have exceptional attitudes to learning.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision

are outstanding

- Pupils make exceptional progress during their boarding experience at this college. In addition to learning English language skills, they grow in confidence and accelerate in their personal and social development. Pupils report very positively about boarding and fully recommend this college to others. This college provides a well-rounded experience of learning in an English environment, offering diversity in an international boarding community.
- The safety and welfare of pupils is paramount in the boarding provision. Staff implement robust procedures effectively to create a safe site. Pupils report that they feel safe and recognise that the college staff are available to support them.
- On site there is an exceptional range of sports facilities and communal areas for activities. Pupils enjoy the varied activity programme and weekend excursions. Outings provide an extension to learning from topics covered in the classrooms. Adventurous activities such as water sports and coasteering allow them to be challenged within a framework of measured risk.
- Regular surveys establish pupils' views. Staff are committed to respond to the 'student voice' and provide a personal response to any issues raised. This level of consultation indicates the value the college places on the views of pupils and enables pupils to inform the development of the college.
- Senior staff monitor the quality of the boarding provision through staff performance reviews and pupils' feedback. College leaders have high expectations of their staff, providing training and support to deliver a boarding experience of outstanding quality.

Quality of care and support in the boarding provision

is outstanding

- Pupils receive a comprehensive induction to the college. They are welcomed and appraised of college routines and relevant British customs and legislation. Pupils report that the website and documentation pre-arrival informed them well about this college, and what to expect.
- The college matron manages the healthcare arrangements for pupils extremely well. Staff who are trained in first aid and the safe administration of medicines provide prompt attentive care when pupils are injured or unwell. The matron has established strong links with local health professionals. This collaborative working ensures that pupils have their health and medical needs fully met at the college and in the wider community.
- The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding. Effective communication amongst key staff members and heads of department ensures that pupils' health and welfare are given top priority. The student liaison officer undertakes an individual assessment soon after pupils arrive to identify any pastoral needs they may have. College staff have an excellent understanding of the emotional difficulties pupils may encounter while being away from their home in another country.
- The boarding accommodation is arranged in one purpose-built house. Pupils benefit from twin rooms with en-suite facilities, fitted with good-quality furniture and fittings. The levels of privacy and security are good, as pupils are protected by personal key codes to access each room. All meals are taken in the dining room or café, where a broad range of nutritious meals are provided. The quality of the food is extremely good, representing a diverse selection of menus from around the world.
- Pupils can choose to board in homestay accommodation. All hosts live within walking distance from the college. Homestay hosts and their accommodation are subject to stringent checks to ensure that they offer a safe, comfortable environment. At the time of this inspection, arrangements were being finalised for three pupils to reside in homestay for the Christmas holiday period. College staff sensitively arrange for the hosts to live in the same road to enable them to remain in close contact with each other. They are being supported with this transition as they prepare for the cultural experience of spending Christmas with a British family.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 141138 |
| Social care unique reference number | SC481067 |
| Inspection number | 60006027 |
| DfE registration number | 835/6038 |

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

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| Type of school | International language college |
| School status | Independent boarding school |
| Age range of pupils | 15–17 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 17 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 4 |
| Number of part time pupils | 0 |
| Number of boarders on roll | 17 |
| Proprietor | Harrow House International College (Swanage) Ltd |
| Chair | Robert a'Barrow |
| Headteacher | Sharon Patterson |
| Annual fees | £12,500–14,782 |
| Telephone number | 01929 424421 |
| Website | www.harrowhouse.co.uk |
| Email address | info@harrowhouse.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | First inspection |

Information about this school

- Harrow House is an international English language college that has been operating as a family-based business since 1969.
- It is registered with Ofsted to deliver an International Academic Semester programme for up to 30 residential pupils who wish to pursue accreditation through the Cambridge English Language Assessment examinations and follow a wider range of courses at GCSE and A level.
- None of the current 17 pupils has a statement of special educational needs, or can be identified as disadvantaged. This means that none are known to qualify for free school meals, or are looked after by a local authority.
- All speak English as an additional language because they are foreign pupils studying in the United Kingdom in order to gain a greater language proficiency in English and to experience an English education programme.

- The college does not have any designated alternative provision but links with a local secondary school provide support for all pupils on the International Academic Semester programme.
- The college does not enter pupils early for any external examinations.
- The college was first registered by Ofsted in October 2014 and this is its first Ofsted inspection. It is also inspected by The British Council, most recently in April 2015, and by the Independent Schools Inspectorate, most recently in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice. Five lessons were observed, three of them jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a range of key staff, including the headteacher, the academic manager, the accommodation and welfare manager, the student liaison officer, the estates manager, the senior housekeeper, the matron, the office manager and the company's business development director. The social care inspector spent time with young people and staff in the residential facilities.
- The Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire did not receive enough responses to create an analysis of parents' views. These were, therefore, gathered from emails and correspondence from parents received by the college. It was not possible to meet any, since none live in the United Kingdom.
- The views of staff were gathered from their responses to the staff questionnaire and from discussions held throughout the inspection.
- A meeting was held with representative pupils and opportunities were taken to talk to pupils throughout the inspection. The social care inspector met pupils in the residential facilities outside the college day and was shown the range of facilities, including a sample of pupils' rooms. Pupils' work was looked at in lessons and a sample of pupils' written work was scrutinised in order to gain a view of progress. Case studies provided a picture of wider provision and of how pupils are supported over time.
- Inspectors checked for compliance with the independent school standards and with the national minimum standards for residential schools. They looked at a wide range of documentation covering educational and residential aspects of the college. These included the progress and achievement of pupils, planning and assessment, self-evaluation and improvement planning, and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Clare Davies

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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