

TASIS

Coldharbour Lane, Thorpe, Egham, Surrey TW20 8TE

Overall outcome

Boarding provision

The school meets all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

The overall experiences and progress of children

- Many changes and improvements have been made to the boarding provision since the last progress monitoring inspection in December 2016. These have had a positive impact on the day-to-day experience of boarding students. Students are now able to prepare hot and cold snacks for themselves using high quality kitchen units installed in each of the boarding houses.
- All boarding students now have unhindered access to lockable cabinets in their rooms and this enables them to keep personal and valuable items safe.
- The increase in numbers and availability of boarding staff enhances the opportunity for students to develop supportive, nurturing relationships.
- The students spoken to during this inspection said they feel well supported and would feel confident discussing any concerns they may have with a member of the boarding team.
- Students are able to make their views on the boarding provision known, and they are actively involved in planning future development of the boarding houses.

How well children are helped and protected

- There is a new designated safeguarding lead person who demonstrates a determination to raise the collective knowledge of safeguarding practice across the school.
- Leaders, managers and staff now have a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities for keeping students safe and protecting them from harm.
- The training staff now receive in relation to safeguarding matters ensures they quickly identify issues which could have a negative impact on the safety and well-being students.
- Systems have been introduced to ensure that staff know the whereabouts of students at all times, and there are no longer periods when there is not a named member of staff with responsibility for the supervision and welfare of students.
- Improved communication means that relevant staff are now aware of students' particular vulnerabilities. This has resulted in prompt action being taken when a student is at risk of coming to harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

- Since the progress monitoring inspection in December 2016 there have been changes to the leadership and management structure. There is a new headteacher, new head of boarding and a new chair of the governing body. These changes have had a positive impact. The leadership team demonstrates a clear understanding of how and why the school has recently failed to meet the national minimum standards

for boarding schools, and has taken effective action to raise standards.

- The governing body now meets its responsibilities for monitoring and scrutinising the quality of care being provided. They have a greater presence in the boarding provision and this includes 'walk arounds' where they can observe staff practice and monitor the standard of accommodation.
- Monitoring systems have been improved and there are now specific committees who maintain oversight of the boarding provision and safeguarding practice. Any weaknesses in the standard of care are quickly identified.
- The most recent development plan, known as a 'compliance action plan,' is a comprehensive document and an effective tool for driving forward continuous improvement in the boarding provision.
- Managerial oversight of the complaints process has ensured that any concerns raised by students and parents are effectively addressed. Complaints are now seen as an opportunity to learn and develop practice in the best interests of students.

Compliance with national minimum standards for boarding schools

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection

- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (NMS 7.1).
- In addition to main meals, boarders have access to drinking water and to food or the means of hygienically preparing food at reasonable times. Schools are sensitive to boarders' individual needs in this respect (NMS 8.3).
- Reasonable protection is provided for boarders' personal possessions and for any boarders' money or valuables looked after by the school (NMS 9.3).
- The school ensures that:
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 11.1).
- The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary (NMS 13.1).
- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between academic and boarding staff (NMS 13.2).
- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role (NMS 13.3).
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met (NMS 13.4).
- The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the well-being of pupils (NMS 13.5).
- The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix 1 (NMS 13.7).
- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate (NMS 13.8).
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate (NMS 13.9).
- Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 14.1).
- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with pupils, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with pupils. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence (NMS 14.3).
- The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number, training and experience for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved (NMS 15.3).
- Boarders are at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who is suitably qualified and experienced (NMS 15.4).

- Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Boarders are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith (NMS 17.1).
- The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards (NMS 18.1).
- The school's written record of complaints identifies those complaints relating to boarding provision, and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) (NMS 18.2).

The school now meets the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (NMS 7.1). At the time of the last progress monitoring inspection on December 1 2016, the boarding staff had not received fire safety training. All boarding staff have now completed fire marshal training and there is a rolling fire safety training programme which ensures they are kept up to date.
- In addition to main meals, boarders have access to drinking water and to food or the means of hygienically preparing food at reasonable times. Schools are sensitive to boarders' individual needs in this respect (NMS 8.3).
There are now high quality facilities and provisions in each boarding house, enabling students to prepare hot and cold food and snacks at reasonable times.
- Reasonable protection is provided for boarders' personal possessions and for any boarders' money or valuables looked after by the school (NMS 9.3).
Students have previously been required to pay a small deposit for a key to a lockable cabinet in their room. This practice has been stopped so that all students now have access to a lockable cabinet as a matter of course. There is greater recognition from senior staff that students have a right to report any theft of property to the police, and this message is being rolled out to students.
- The school ensures that:
arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 11.1).
There has been a significant cultural change at the school in relation to promoting the welfare of students and protecting them from harm. There is an acceptance from senior staff that the school has previously failed to meet the required standards, and insufficient priority was given to keeping students safe. All boarding staff now have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding practice. There is improved understanding of the national minimum standards and associated documents such as 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. There has been a strong focus on developing staff knowledge and providing training in relation to risk management and the procedures for managing safeguarding concerns. The new designated safeguarding lead person is effective, proactive and focused on meeting his professional responsibilities for safeguarding.

Documents reviewed during this inspection provide detailed records of safeguarding incidents from instigation to outcome. There is evidence of effective and regular communication with external safeguarding professionals and this has helped ensure child protection matters are referred to the relevant agencies in a timely manner.

- The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary (NMS 13.1).

The governing board have recognised that previously they did not provide the level of scrutiny and challenge required. The board are now familiar with the practice audits and action plans that have been formulated since the last monitoring inspection. They have greater oversight of safeguarding matters and communicate effectively with the relevant staff to ensure action plans are being progressed. Board members are now clear about their roles and responsibilities, and with the functions of key committees with responsibility for reviewing and monitoring progress in all required areas.

- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between academic and boarding staff (NMS 13.2).

At the progress monitoring inspection in December 2016 it was evident that boarding staff were not receiving regular supervision from their line managers, and there was no record kept of the training staff had undertaken in relation to their boarding responsibilities. Since this inspection staff have undertaken a thorough training programme to update their safeguarding knowledge. They have also completed training on other subjects which are pertinent to their role. There is a detailed electronic log of training completed and also evidence of certificates and attendance.

Staff induction has improved. There is now a comprehensive induction programme, which includes pre-arrival on-line training, and a full on-site induction programme. Staff report that there are good support mechanisms in place. This includes termly face-to-face supervision with a line manager. Although not all staff have received supervision during the current term, there is a timetable in place to ensure this happens.

- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role (NMS 13.3).

Previously, the newly appointed head of boarding was found to have insufficient experience, knowledge and skills to fulfil the role effectively. Since the last monitoring inspection a new head of boarding has been appointed. She has relevant experience and demonstrates a commitment to making continuous improvements to the boarding provision. During this inspection she demonstrated a detailed understanding of how the boarding provision had previously failed to meet all the national minimum standards. Many new boarding staff have been recruited and all were found to have relevant knowledge and experience to perform their roles effectively.

The action plans to address failures in meeting all the national minimum standards have not consistently contained the level of detail needed to ensure standards

improve. However, a 'compliance action plan' dated 10 September 2017 was reviewed during this inspection. It is a comprehensive plan which clearly identifies possible areas of weakness and the actions required to improve the boarding provision.

- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met (NMS 13.4).

In December 2016 it was found that management monitoring systems were not evaluating the effectiveness of actions taken to meet the national minimum standards. There has been significant improvements to this aspect of leadership and management. New systems have been implemented and these have been effective. Monitoring and evaluation processes now include practice audits and director and senior leaders 'walk arounds' which provide opportunities to observe staff practice and the quality of boarding accommodation. Increased consultation is taking place with all stakeholders; leaders and managers have initiated new links with other providers and relevant professionals.

- The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the well-being of pupils (NMS 13.5).

There is a positive culture being developed across the whole school which promotes the welfare of students. The statement of boarding principles reflects this emerging culture. The school's safeguarding action plan is a detailed and effective tool for ensuring that the welfare of students is given a high priority. The designated safeguarding lead person has taken a creative approach to ensuring the welfare needs of new students are clearly documented.

New technology has been introduced to enable closer monitoring of students whereabouts. The system is being utilised well, and it has been instrumental in alerting staff to possible welfare concerns.

- The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix 1, which refer to care of boarders and pupil access to an independent visitor. (NMS 13.7).

In December 2016 the inspectors were concerned that staff had not read the boarding staff handbook. The school's independent visitor had not been on site during the term, and there were no plans for when she would be attending the school. At this inspection the revised boarding staff handbook was found to be a comprehensive guide, detailing how staff should care for students and promote their welfare. All boarding staff spoken to during the inspection confirmed that they were required to read the handbook as part of their induction programme. This has helped ensure that staff implement the standards of practice highlighted in the document.

Students have been provided with information and contact details for the independent visitor. This includes an information video outlining the role the independent visitor performs. The independent visitor has visited the school on at least two occasions since the progress monitoring inspection took place in December 2016.

- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate (NMS 13.8).

In December 2016 the schools electronic system for reporting welfare and safeguarding concerns was not being used effectively. Staff did not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the issues that needed to be reported to the school's designated safeguarding lead person. Staff are now using the electronic reporting system for the purpose intended. This ensures any concerns for a student's welfare are quickly brought to the attention of the designated safeguarding lead. Staff spoken to during this inspection were able to give clear accounts of the actions they would take in response to a safeguarding or child protection matter. These accounts were in accordance with the procedures specified in the school's safeguarding policy.

- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate (NMS 13.9).

Previously the school's electronic records system did not contain sufficient information to alert relevant staff to a student's known vulnerabilities. The recording of information on the system has improved. This has had a positive impact on how students are supported and helped.

More effective communication regarding safeguarding matters is taking place between leaders and managers. The designated safeguarding lead person and headteacher regularly communicate and share information regarding allegations against staff, and subsequent referrals made to the local authority designated officer. There are now regular detailed reports provided to directors in relation to safeguarding issues, and the designated safeguarding lead person and others with safeguarding responsibilities are held to account.

- Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 14.1).

There has been a significant improvement in staff recruitment practice. Greater scrutiny of potential employees is taking place. For example, all gaps in a candidate's employment history are now fully explored. Records clearly indicate where overseas criminal record checks are required and the outcome of these enquiries. Risk assessments are now routinely completed where any staff member commences their employment prior to background checks being completed.

- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with pupils, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with pupils. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence (NMS 14.3).

There is now a system in place to ensure written agreements are made with all non-employed over 16 year olds who reside on the school premises. The agreements specify the expectations relating to contact with pupils. Detailed and clear guidance regarding the supervision of visitors to non-employed adults on the school site are explicit in the written agreements.

- The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number, training and experience for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved (NMS 15.3).

During the monitoring inspection in December 2016 leaders and managers stated an intention to establish a dedicated team of boarding staff, but there was no timescale or plan for achieving this. There are now many newly appointed boarding staff. Boarding staff have significantly reduced their teaching responsibilities and this enables them to provide more support to students. Staff are able to develop relationships with students and this in turn encourages students to seek adult support when needed. Systems that enable staff to ascertain the location of students at any time have been introduced. Rules pertaining to off-site unsupervised activities are focused on student's safety. There are now sufficient numbers of staff on campus to respond to emergency situations at all times.
- Boarders are at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who is suitably qualified and experienced (NMS 15.4).

There are no longer significant periods of time when there is not a named responsible member of boarding staff available to meet the needs of students. Staff are motivated and positive about the changes that have been made at the school. They are knowledgeable and able to implement good safeguarding practice, processes and procedures.
- Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Boarders are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith (NMS 17.1).

At the progress monitoring inspection in December 2016 it was established that the role of the independent visitor was not being effectively promoted. This meant students were unlikely to take the opportunity to raise concerns with an independent person. The role of the independent person is now being effectively communicated, and students spoken to during this inspection knew how to contact her.

Strong practice was identified in relation to boarding students having the opportunity to contribute views on the operation of the boarding provision. For example, the senior leadership team boarding committee now includes student representatives.
- The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards (NMS 18.1).

In December 2016 the inspectors were concerned that the complaints system was disorganised, and the outcome of a complaint was not always being recorded. All documents pertaining to a complaint are now filed together, and there is a clear administrative process providing an audit trail of the actions that have been completed.
- The school's written record of complaints identifies those complaints relating to boarding provision, and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) (NMS 18.2).

The headteacher now has oversight of all complaints made by boarders and parents. A written record is kept of actions taken in response to complaints. Records provide

clarity regarding outcomes. Details are kept of the complainant's feedback when the end of the complaints process is reached.

School details

Unique reference number	125423
Social care unique reference number	SC013945
DfE registration number	936/6532
Inspection number	10035873

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.

Type of school	Boarding school
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	644
Number of boarders on roll	165
Headteacher	Bryan Nixon
Head of boarding	Katie Peacock
Telephone number	01932 565252
Website	http://england.tasis.com
Email address	headofschool@tasisengland.org
Date of previous boarding inspection	1 December 2016

Information about this school

- TASIS England, also known as The American School in England, is part of the TASIS Foundation operating schools in England, Switzerland and Puerto Rico. The school was founded in 1976 by Mary Crist Fleming and is situated on a 46-acre campus in the village of Thorpe near Egham in Surrey. TASIS England is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and the European Council of International Schools.
- The school is registered as an independent co-educational boarding school for boys and girls. It is registered to accept 800 pupils aged three to 18 years. There are currently 644 pupils on roll, including 165 boarders. There have been significant changes in staff and senior management since the last inspection. An interim headteacher was appointed in April 2017 and a new headteacher took up post in July 2017.

- There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan or with a statement of special educational needs. However, the school has identified pupils who have additional educational needs and offers additional support for them. Pupils attending the school are from a wide range of countries around the world. The largest proportions are from the United States, with many others from Europe, Asia and South America.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the national minimum standards that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the second progress monitoring inspection since the last full inspection. It was carried out without notice.
- The school's action plan to address the failings identified in the last full inspection was rejected by the Department for Education in May 2017.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and head of boarding as well as other senior and middle leaders. They also met with members of the governing board, the designated safeguarding lead, the deputy designated safeguarding lead, staff responsible for the single central record and with a group of boarding house staff.
- The inspectors undertook a tour of the boarding houses and had conversations with a number of students along the way. A wide range of documents, including those relating to staff practice, action planning, safeguarding, health and safety, risk assessment and training were examined by the inspectors.
- The inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff in relation to their suitability to work with children and discussed the effectiveness of safeguarding with the school's designated safeguarding lead and other staff. The inspector also examined the quality of the information provided by the school on its website.

Inspection team

Stephen Collett, lead inspector	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Amanda Maxwell	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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