

Rugby School

Inspection report for Boarding School

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Inspector	Warren Clarke / Joanne Vyas
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Date of last inspection	01/11/2004

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Rugby School, which is co-educational, was established as a boys' grammar school in 1567. It has expanded over the centuries and is situated on a campus on the edge of the town centre of Rugby.

Currently there are 643 boarders 43 per cent of whom are females and 57 per cent males. Those who board are accommodated in 13 boarding houses within easy reach of all the school facilities and local amenities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This key inspection was announced and conducted by a team of four inspectors over three days. During the inspection the school's performance was assessed against all the key standards. Achieving economic wellbeing was not inspected. The assessment focused on welfare arrangements for the 643 pupils who currently board at the school during term time. There are well-established boarding welfare arrangements and an extensive range of sporting and extra-curricular activities. Each house is distinct and staff and boarders within them foster a strong sense of affiliation and belongingness. Boarding arrangements are complemented by comprehensive school health care facilities and services.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection shortfalls identified elicited two key issues and a range of advisory or good practice recommendations. The school manager with responsibility for boarding welfare submitted an action plan to the previous regulators the Commission for Social Care Inspection with satisfactory measures to address the shortfalls. The first key issue was in relation to more active promotion of the complaints procedure with updated details of the then regulators. The second related to health and safety deficits. All these matters have been attended and are no longer of concern.

Five advisory recommendations were made in relation to staying safe. They referred to ensuring that the updated child protection procedure accords with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and that all staff and prefects receive appropriate child protection training or briefings. Safe caring guidelines have been strengthened in relation to staff one to one contact with boarders. Changes to accommodation arrangements during exam periods and more robust documentation to demonstrate rigour in vetting staff's suitability have been implemented. These matters were attended to soon after the last inspection.

Three similar recommendations were to address quality monitoring and active involvement of boarders in the welfare arrangements in terms of seeking their views and opinions and taking them into account. These recommendations have also been successfully fulfilled to the extent that boarders comment positively upon the extent to which they are listened to and heard.

Remaining recommendations have been attended to satisfactorily. They related to boarding staff training and the need for wider adoption across the school of the excellent examples of welfare planning and documentation. In essence, the school has embraced all recommendations and has made excellent improvement.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are benefiting from provision that the school makes to ensure it has sufficient information about their health care needs, the necessary authorisation to attend to those needs, and an extensive and coherent range of services for so doing. Boarders' good health is promoted by a number of initiatives to encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The school, including the boarding houses, create a healthy environment for children and young people. It is clean, orderly and well-equipped. For example, general fixtures and fittings such as bathing and toilet facilities are all sufficient to promote health and hygiene.

Comprehensive information about each child and young person's health informs health plans. These ensure that any existing health problems are effectively attended and appropriate responses made to emerging problems. This together with a comprehensive range of health services under the umbrella of the school's sanatorium, which includes GP services, in-house nursing staff and counsellors, ensures that boarders physical and emotional health is monitored and any difficulties are addressed promptly. Sufficient facilities are provided both in the houses and the sanatorium to be able to isolate, if necessary, those who are sick and may need close home nursing. The school is, therefore, well placed to limit spread of any infectious condition among boarders.

There is a coherent approach to health promotion within the school. Boarding staff discharge their substitute parenting duties wisely. They ensure each child and young person is supervised and guided to maintain high standards of personal hygiene and learn to take some responsibility for promoting their own health. This is complemented by the physical health and social education programme which successfully engages and guides boarders to a balanced understanding of the health and social consequences of issues such as drugs and substance misuse, smoking and alcohol. Having access to approachable house staff and confidential access to medical and counselling personnel means that any concerns that children and young people have about their health, relationships or the effects of sub-culture activities

may be taken to a range of people. External organisations providing help lines for children and young people are promoted in the houses and throughout the school. Boarders, therefore, have the opportunity to seek independent support if they wish.

The school provides an extensive range of sports and leisure activities so organised that all boarders benefit from physical exercise, without necessarily having to demonstrate sporting prowess. In this context, boarders consider that they are in good physical condition.

Excellent catering arrangements ensure boarders receive a wholesome diet with plenty of choice. The quality and presentation of meals is routinely scrutinised by senior staff and the catering manager. Each boarding house has its own catering facilities and staff enabling boarders to contribute to menu planning and prepare food to suit their own needs and preferences. House staff have a good awareness of eating disorders and a monitoring system ensures that boarders with any such difficulties are identified and supported. Catering staff bring an imaginative approach to boarders' diet and nutrition with, for example, the Balance and Healthy Eating Awareness Week in which boarders are invited to taste exotic foods, observe healthy meal preparation and learn from displays about food groups.

Overall arrangements for the safe management of boarders' medication is good with systems for administering prescription and non-prescription medication. Staff are aware of medication policy and procedure and have access to practice guidance. Practice between boarding houses varies regarding recording arrangements for receipt, administration, safe storage, labelling and disposal of medication and is not regularly monitored by a senior member of staff. Boarders learn to take responsibility for their own health and are encouraged with support to actively manage their own medication.

The boarding population presents as in robust health, and those with known medical conditions receive excellent care. Boarders are confident in the well-established care arrangements should they become ill. Well considered systems to manage and co-ordinate arrangements to promote children and young people's health are in place.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are being protected from harm, abuse and other forms of unfavourable treatment in the school environment where they say they feel safe. This is achieved by an effective safeguarding rationale and a wide range of practical, safe caring measures.

The school has in place an excellent child protection policy and procedure, endorsed by the Local Safeguarding Children Board which staff and senior pupils understand. Its close liaison with the local child protection co-ordinator results in independent scrutiny of child protection activities in the school. This enhances and safeguards boarders' welfare.

An effective counter-bullying policy is well promoted and has been adopted by the school's stakeholders. The school regards bullying in any form as unacceptable. A clear strategy for prevention and a good range of strategies for responding to any incidents are in place. Boarders consider that the school deals effectively with bullying and that it is not a significant problem. They clearly recognise their own responsibility in ensuring that it remains a happy, friendly community in which to live. There is clear co-ordination of child protection within the school and staff at all levels are aware of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders

A clear behaviour management policy is established, the central tenet of which is to support boarders to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Rules and sanctions are kept to the minimum; they are clear, fair and understood by boarders and their parents. The emphasis is on reinforcing good conduct and acting firmly but helpfully when boarders misbehave. This has resulted in some boarders appreciating the impact of their behaviour on others and of their own volition make apologies. Parents have complimented the school on its proportionate and helpful approach to disciplining the children. Records of sanctions are being maintained, for example issuing of warnings and restricting boarders to school premises for a reasonable and defined period.

A clear complaints procedure and approachable staff enable boarders' to freely express any complaints or concerns they have about their care. The school takes these seriously and deals with them promptly. Information promoting the complaints procedure makes clear to boarders that they may approach other official bodies such as Ofsted with their concerns.

Fire precaution measures such as tests of the alarm system and fire drills are being carried out in accordance with relevant standards and regulations. Fire fighting equipment and emergency lighting are tested and serviced at appropriate intervals. These measures have been demonstrated to be effective in protecting boarders from harm. In a recent instance of a fire incident when the particular building was efficiently evacuated and damage was minimal.

Boarders to benefit from a high level of discreet supervision and staffing levels are good. Children and young people value this supervision and the range of other measures such as external CCTV, which engender feelings of safety without being intrusive. Boarders with single bedroom accommodation value the privacy that this affords, and in other houses where some bedrooms are shared are equally content with the arrangements.

Comprehensive and robust arrangements are in place for the vetting of staff to establish their suitability as employees. The staff selection process is rigorous to reduce the risk to boarders of those who might be unsuitable. Resident staff's families and gap students are ascertained as being suitable. Excellent provisions are made to control access to boarders and to minimise risk to them from unauthorised visitors and intruders. A comprehensive range of measures has been instituted which

contributes to the sense of safety.

All areas of the school have been risk-assessed and where necessary control measures, such as those related to security, have been taken. There are relatively few health and safety events such as accidents to boarders. These are mainly minor and sports related. A health and safety committee ensures that the protection of pupils from harm is given high priority and any shortfall in this area is quickly attended to.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' welfare is safeguarded and promoted at the school by a comprehensive support network which includes senior managers, teaching and non-teaching staff and senior boarders. Attending successfully to their health and well-being, staff provide boarders ample opportunities to develop their talents and interests in an enjoyable environment.

Boarders are all fully integrated into the school, are valued and respected. Their experience is that it is a friendly and welcoming place where they are spurred on to achieve regardless of their background, interests and ability. This accords with the headmaster's vision of the school as a nurturing environment where children and young people are so imbued with optimism that they can begin to 'dream dreams' of their potential to achieve. There is support for those with specific difficulties and proper provisions are made for those whose first language is not English. Needs arising from boarders' sex, religion and culture are met. There is, however, concern that some boarders struggle physically in games lessons during periods of religious fasting. Although officially such boarders are permitted easement from participation this is not entirely understood across the school. Structural adaptations have been made to accommodate those who have physical disabilities or mobility difficulties improving accessibility for all boarders.

There is awareness of the kind of difficulties that boarders might encounter in living away from home such as homesickness. Arrangements are made for this and boarders receive positive support in this regard. All staff are vigilant to the personal support needs of boarders. Senior staff adopt a proactive approach in making themselves available and have systems in place to provide early alert to boarders' difficulties so that they can be addressed promptly. In this connection, the headmaster and management team and the chaplain spend time in each house on a regular basis. Some boarders and their parents provide the school with complimentary feedback on the support it gives when a boarder is confronted by life challenges such as fractured family relationships or bereavement.

The school achieves an excellent balance between promoting academic success and providing students with a range of extra-curricular activities. These include sports, cadet force, creative and performing arts, which promote constructive occupation of

leisure time, inspire interests and hone their non-academic talents. Some boarders consider that this boosts their self-confidence in all areas including academic work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are content with their care, conduct themselves with the self-assurance and their views and opinions are respected. The school fosters courtesy, respect and good relationships amongst boarders and throughout the school. Children and young people are positively engaged in matters concerning their care and education. The essence of feedback that boarders give about how they are looked after is that their boarding experience is as close an approximation to living at home, as can be achieved.

Prefects are appointed and have specific duties among which is to represent boarders' views and opinions to the school's management team. Boarders are comfortable with being so represented and feel their views are heard. This provides an additional benefit in that boarders regard prefects as someone they are likely to approach with any personal difficulties. Prefects are able to meet to discuss pupil issues without staff present and before presenting them to the management team.

Boarders are able to influence how they are looked after in their particular boarding house. They do so through a variety of forums such as house, year group and think tank and food committee meetings. Those not confident in such forums are able to talk informally to house staff, matrons are good at helping when things need to be changed. Changes are made and facilities provided, such as social events, introduction of football and equipment for boarding houses, as a result of staff listening to them.

The school recognises the importance of boarders' contact with their parents and families and have in place well-established means of communicating with parents. Electronic means of communication such as e-mail enable house staff to maintain regular contact with parents, particularly those overseas, about their children's progress and any concerns they may have. Most boarders have mobile telephones, but a payphone is provided in each house where calls can be made in private. Visiting arrangements for parents to visit their children at the school are reasonable and are valued by some boarders who benefit from this form of contact during term time. Evidence of excellence is apparent in the ways that staff promote the welfare of boarders in circumstances where family difficulties are likely to affect contact, and impact on their progress and general well-being.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Boarders benefit from the school's system of residential education, which is rooted in effective management and clear leadership. Strategic management is evident and operational management arrangements are coherent and effective in application. There is a clear sense of purpose about the school from a committed staff team the members of which are clear about their roles and tasks.

A range of documents in the form of handbooks, policies, procedure and guidance together with the school's prospectus constitutes a clear, comprehensive statement of principles for the operation of the boarding facilities and care of boarders. Guides for boarders and parents, made available in hard copy and electronically, accurately reflect the boarding arrangements and the education and care that boarders experience. This enables boarders and parents to make an informed choice, at the pre-entry stage, about the relevance of the school and the quality of service they can expect when a child or young person enters boarding. The outstanding facilities and welfare practices set out in the school's statement of principles is accurately reflected in practice and this is recognised by boarders and their parents.

The headmaster and the management team demonstrate unequivocally that they are discharging their monitoring duties in relation to assessment of risks to boarders. They have effective mechanisms to identify and act on any undesirable trends as might be revealed via the complaints records, discipline log and accident records. Boarders have a high level of satisfaction with security arrangements and the care taken to protect them from harm generally. Through the monitoring and scrutiny by the health and safety and pastoral committees, boarders are taught how to keep themselves safe, which acts to safeguard them both within and outside school.

There are sufficient numbers of staff to supervise them outside teaching time. They are deployed well and cover is arranged for staff sickness absence. A balance between male and female staff affords boarders choice in who to approach with any personal difficulties they may have.

Job descriptions clearly set out staff roles and tasks resulting in the discharge of their duties with a clear sense of purpose. Leadership within school and boarding houses provides security for boarders, and their understanding of the various staff responsibilities enables them to determine who is most relevant to approach with any problems they have. Staff at all levels consider that they have a responsibility for the promotion and safeguard of boarders' welfare, a factor that contributes to boarders' positive regard for the school.

An established induction programme for all staff, review each term for those who are new to the school together with annual appraisals and in-service training ensure that boarders are looked after by competent staff. They are able to contribute to good outcomes for boarders and thereby achieve the school's objectives.

Sufficient time and resources are provided so that boarding staff can attend

efficiently to the administrative aspects of boarding welfare. There is effective day-to-day communication of boarders' circumstances and needs so that staff on duty intervene appropriately. Staff meetings are held to review boarders' care and progress and all records and record keeping in matters concerning welfare are current, sufficiently detailed, securely stored and treated with appropriate confidentiality.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the written records of all medication administered to boarders is signed by the responsible member of staff and is regularly monitored by an appropriate designated senior member of staff (NMS 15.12)
- ensure that appropriate exemption is made for religious observance requirements for boarders who are fasting (NMS 18.5).