## Tudor Hall School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<tr>
<td>Inspector</td>
<td>Robert Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Tudor Hall School Wykham Lane BANBURY Oxfordshire OX16 9UR</td>
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<td>Telephone number</td>
<td>01295 263434</td>
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<td>Registered person</td>
<td>Tudor Hall School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head of care</td>
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<td>Head / Principal</td>
<td>Wendy Griffiths</td>
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<td>Date of last inspection</td>
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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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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

Tudor Hall School is an independent boarding school for girls aged 11-18, located just outside the town of Banbury in Oxfordshire. The school currently accommodates 227 boarders and an additional 68 girls attend the school on a day basis. Boarding is offered on termly basis with occasional weekend breaks during each term. The school is based on an explicit Christian ethos but does accept pupils from different religious faiths. The majority of pupils are based in the UK with very few overseas pupils currently attending the school. Boarders are housed in six main areas of boarding accommodation on the school site, organised according to age. Some of the accommodation is more modern and purpose built, other areas are converted parts of the older main school building. The school has extensive recreational facilities for boarding pupils including astroturf sports pitches, gym and swimming pool and a new library and dining room have been built. The school has extensive and attractive grounds surrounded by rural countryside.

Summary

Tudor Hall School provides a consistently high standard of care for its boarding pupils with many areas of particular strength and only a few areas requiring further development. The school’s pastoral support structure is very strong and provides a caring and supportive environment in which boarders’ welfare needs are readily identified and consistently well met. The school also works very successfully at promoting a caring and co-operative atmosphere in which pupils are willing and able to support one another. Boarders thoroughly enjoy their boarding experience and happily acknowledge the dedicated care and attention paid to them by the staff in the school. Excellent attention is paid to ensuring pupils are cared for in a safe and secure environment and that they are provided with ample opportunities to develop and excel in their chosen field. Standards of behaviour are exemplary and such discipline as is required is exercised fairly and consistently. Overall management and monitoring of boarding welfare matters is excellent and boarding staff are well supported and supervised. The school and governing body are clearly committed to a continuing process of improvement in the standard of boarding provision offered.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The last full welfare inspection of the school’s boarding provision took place in 2003, at which time a large number of recommendations for improvement were made. A subsequent monitoring visit conducted in 2004 by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) confirmed that, with a few minor exceptions, all the recommendations had been fully addressed. The remaining minor issues around further development of child protection policies and procedures have now also been addressed. Since the monitoring visit in 2004 the school has made a significant number of additional improvements that impact upon the quality of boarders' welfare. A head of pastoral care has been appointed to co-ordinate, oversee and develop welfare arrangements for boarders. Significant updating and revision of a number of areas of welfare policy and procedure has been undertaken. Facilities in the school for pupils have been improved, including the new school library, dining room and shop and many areas of boarding provision have also been
upgraded and improved. Further significant investment in new sixth form accommodation has now also been confirmed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The school has a thorough approach to countering typical major health risks faced by boarders. Pupils receive good advice on issues such as alcohol and substance misuse and on how to keep themselves safe through the school curriculum, advice offered in the context of the extensive pastoral support structure and by support from the nursing and medical staff based at the school. The school has clear and robust systems in place for identifying and responding to any significant patterns of health risks. The school obtains relevant information on pupils’ health needs and good systems are in place to ensure all appropriate staff are made aware of individual pupil health concerns and potential areas of risk. The school has excellent levels of nursing advice and support provided through 24 hour registered nurse cover at the school’s sanatorium and a good number of additional staff are trained in emergency first aid. The school provides ready access to local GP services through weekly surgeries at the school and additional individual appointments if required at other times. Medication management in the sanatorium is good and a detailed new policy covering all aspects of medication practice is being introduced. However, shortfalls currently exist in other areas of medication management across the school. Not all medication is being received in the original dispensed containers, records of medication administration in the boarding houses are not being maintained consistently in line with the expectations of the standards and situations where pupils self-medicate are not being consistently risk-assessed by school staff. All of which present a degree of risk to pupils. Where pupils suffer significant or long-term illnesses the school arranges for them to be collected by their families to be cared for at home. For shorter or less severe periods of illness the school provides appropriate accommodation for sick pupils in the recently refurbished sanatorium. The school provides a very good overall standard of food for boarders with a good range of choice and a clear focus on healthy options. The majority of meals are taken in the main dining room, with the exception of the first year pupils who are catered for in their boarding house. The new dining room is a major improvement much appreciated by boarders, who also consider food quality has improved since its introduction. The school has appropriate processes in place to seek the views of pupils on food quality and choice and adjusts menus accordingly. The school ensures the needs of pupils with specialist diets are met appropriately. There is ready access to drinking water across the school, although pupils are not all aware of this, and the school is considering how best to extend this provision.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school has a thorough and robust approach to all areas of practice aimed at keeping pupils and staff safe. Pupils are consistent in their view that the school is very aware of risks they might face and makes them feel very safe and secure while at the school. The school has a generally very detailed and appropriate child protection policy in place supported by clear procedures and guidance for staff. The policy does, however, include some inaccurate references to the role of, and levels of liaison with, Ofsted around the management of child protection incidents that might occur. Contact numbers for Ofsted, as the current regulator of boarding welfare, are inaccurate in various different areas of school documentation. Staff have a good understanding of what action to take in relation to child protection concerns and the school
provides regular training opportunities in this area. The senior staff responsible for leading on child protection have a good understanding of their role and the processes of child protection investigation and have received relevant enhanced training for this role. No child protection concerns have arisen since the last inspection in relation to the school. There is clear guidance for parents on how to raise any formal concerns or complaints about provision at the school although guidance provided for pupils is less clear about how they might formally make complaints. There have no formal complaints received by the school or to the relevant regulatory bodies relating to boarding welfare since the last inspection. Pupils are provided with additional external helpline numbers although that for Ofsted, as the current regulator for boarding welfare matters, is inaccurate. The school has a very clear and proactive approach to bullying that is evidently successful, given that pupils consistently report the school as being free from any significant levels of bullying. Pupils are equally clear that should any future incidents arise they are confident this would be dealt with promptly and appropriately by staff. The school is in fact characterised by the co-operative and considerate nature of its pupils who clearly promote an atmosphere in which they feel supported and nurtured by each other and in which the likelihood of unreported or covert bullying is minimised. Many pupils happily contrast the lack of bullying at Tudor Hall with their less happy experiences of other schools. The school has clear and effective procedures in place to monitor pupils’ whereabouts and to deal with instances of unauthorised absences. There are clear expectations of pupils signing in and out of boarding houses and for older girls when they go off the school site. The school deals firmly with any flouting of those procedures by pupils to ensure they realise how important knowledge of their whereabouts is. Standards of behaviour at the school are extremely high, with pupils seen as courteous and considerate of both adults and other pupils as part of the whole school community. Clear guidance is available for staff and pupils as part of recently revised behaviour policies and procedures. Positive behaviour is appropriately rewarded by the earning of extra privileges, relevant to age, through the Manners reporting system, which has recently been revised to make it more consistent and transparent. Where necessary the school does apply sanctions, largely of a minor nature, to deal with minor pupil indiscretions either in the classroom or house settings. In cases of more serious misbehaviours, which are very rare, appropriate steps are taken to deal with the situation and to apply more significant sanctions if required. Appropriate records of actions taken and sanctions issued are being maintained. Overall pupil feedback is that punishments are issued largely fairly and consistently. Prefects and other school officers do not have the authority to issue punishments themselves. The school promotes reasonable standards of privacy for pupils in terms of boarding accommodation provision and the design and fitting out of bathroom and toilet facilities. The school supplies staff with clear guidance on appropriate supervision of boarders in boarding houses and boarders do not indicate any concerns on their party in this area. The school has robust and consistent processes in place for recruitment of staff to help ensure only appropriate persons are appointed, although there are some minor inconsistencies in the evidencing of telephone confirmation of checks with referees. The school is commendably thorough in checking the suitability of anyone other than school appointed staff who might be staying on school premises and ensures, for example, that enhanced, rather than just standard, Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks are carried out on them. Good attention is also paid to ensuring taxi firms used by the school are appropriately vetted. Good attention is paid to the immediate security of the school site with secure coded locking on access doors to the school and boarding areas and established security locking up procedure each night overseen by school maintenance staff. Further security is provided by CCTV coverage in selected key areas of the school grounds. Pupils are clear about which areas of the grounds may be unsafe or out of bounds. Effective systems are in place to safely manage
the presence of visitors or external contractors on site. The school has good consistent systems in place for ensuring all areas of health and safety are addressed fully. Responsibilities and procedures around risk issues are now effectively managed by a relatively new risk management team structure spanning different areas of school operation. The school also receives expert external consultancy support on management of risk and health and safety matters. Good attention is paid to all aspects of fire safety and regular drills and system tests take place. There are no outstanding requirements by the local fire authority. A substantial and developing body of risk assessments is in place to cover key areas of potential risk, and training on risk assessment has been provided for relevant staff. High risk areas, such as the school swimming pool, are effectively monitored and hazardous materials and equipment are safely stored. Diligent attention is paid to consideration of risk in relation to off-site trips and activities.

**Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

The school provides an excellent level of pastoral support and guidance for its pupils. Pupils speak enthusiastically and unreservedly about the high quality of support they receive from academic and pastoral tutors, boarding house staff and other key figures such as the chaplain, head of pastoral care and the independent counsellor appointed by the school. Pupils clearly feel at ease in approaching any staff with concerns and are treated considerately and fairly when they do. For new younger girls a system of older pupil ‘keepers’ provide additional support and guidance from within the pupil community and similar targeted support is provided for older girls joining the school. Where pupils need extra learning support this is provided for well by the school. As noted earlier in this report pupils are also extremely supportive and considerate of each others’ needs and this aspect of peer support figures highly in pupils’ own descriptions of the support they receive over any problems they may have. Outside of the school staff team structure pupils have good access to an experienced independent counsellor who visits the school weekly and is also available on the telephone. There is an excellent level of communication and sharing of key information between relevant staff when pupil welfare concerns arise and appropriate strategies are put in place when required. These strategies are not yet being formulated into formal welfare plans but the school has now developed a structure for these and is intending to introduce them as and when required. Regular weekly meetings take place to discuss the progress of pupils and to address any areas of welfare concern in a co-ordinated manner across the school. There is no evidence of any isolation of, or discriminatory approaches to, any minority pupil groups within the school and the school works hard to ensure all pupils have the chance to develop their individual strengths and abilities; an approach reflected in pupil comments about how everyone is helped to fit in.

**Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

The school has a excellent range of both formal and informal approaches to obtaining the views of boarders and encouraging their contribution to improving boarding provision. There is a school council in place for school-wide issues, supplemented by less formal meetings in boarding houses to pick up on more day-to-day matters. Observations of relationships between pupils and staff and the views of pupils themselves also confirm that they find it easy to approach and talk to staff about a range of matters and feel that, generally, their views and opinions are respected. The school ensures pupils have good and ready access to various means of contacting their families at all appropriate times. Pupils can use mobile phones (times of access dependent
upon the age of pupils), telephones in houses and individual email accounts. Consideration is
given to pupils whose parents may be overseas in terms of times of telephone access and school
telephones can be used for urgent matters. The school maintains good contact with parents
over any areas of welfare concern.

**Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is not judged.

The are no relevant key standards under this outcome area so an overall judgement has not
been made. However, this inspection confirms the continuing high level of investment the
school is making in improving both general facilities and boarding house standards. The new
dining room and library are testimony to this and there are plans in place for significant
improvement to sixth form accommodation that will enable a further roll out of improvements
to other areas of boarding accommodation over time. There are no significant shortfalls in
current boarding accommodation.

**Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has appropriate documentation in place for boarders and their families which clearly
outlines the ethos and day to day operation of boarding both generally across the school, and
within each house. Boarding welfare matters are managed excellently by the school. Clear
leadership is offered by the head teacher and the assistant head with lead responsibility for
pastoral and boarding matters. Attention to, and development of, boarders’ welfare is clearly
on the school’s improvement agenda and is well supported by the governing body. Good
oversight and monitoring of key areas boarding welfare practice is offered by the senior
management team in their various roles. This is aided by the direct involvement and presence
of senior staff in and around the boarding houses and during evening and weekend activities,
where direct observation of boarding welfare practice can be exercised. Staffing levels outside
of teaching times are good with a particular focus on enhanced staffing to support the needs
of younger boarders. The school’s staff team work well together to cover any planned or
unexpected gaps in staffing cover to ensure good continuity of care for boarders. There are
clear expectations of boarding staff laid out in up to date job descriptions and there is an
effective appraisal system covering exercise of boarding responsibilities by staff. The school
senior team takes appropriate and prompt action where any concerns about staff boarding
practice arise. Good attention is paid to support and induction of staff with boarding
responsibilities and specific elements of the school’s internal training programme are aimed at
staff with pastoral responsibilities. Boarding staff also confirm that the school supports
attendance at external training that is relevant to boarding welfare responsibilities. A good
number of boarding staff have completed the relevant Boarding School’s Association training
for house staff. Staff are provided with personal copies of the school’s up to date policies and
procedures to ensure they are familiar with all areas of practice expectation and school
operations.

**What must be done to secure future improvement?**

**Statutory requirements**

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the
Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must
comply with the given timescales.
Recommendations

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

- review systems for receipt of medication, maintenance of records of administration and risk assessment of situations where pupils may self administer, so as to ensure full adherence to the expectations of the relevant National Minimum Standard (NMS 15). (Welfare recommendation)
- ensure clear evidence of telephone confirmation of references is maintained on staff recruitment files (NMS 38)
- clarify in information provided for pupils the process for making complaints (NMS 5)
Annex

National Minimum Standards for boarding school

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders’ health is promoted (NMS 6)
- safeguarding and promoting boarders’ health and welfare are supported by appropriate records (NMS 7)
- boarders’ receive first aid and health care as necessary (NMS 15)
- boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill (NMS 16)
- boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal problems (NMS 17)
- boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals (NMS 25)
- boarders are suitably accommodated when ill (NMS 48)
- boarders’ clothing and bedding are adequately laundered (NMS 49).

Ofsted considers 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders are protected from bullying (NMS 2)
- boarders are protected from abuse (NMS 3)
- use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate (NMS 4)
- boarders’ complaints are responded to appropriately (NMS 5)
- the operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders’ welfare (NMS 13)
- boarders’ welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school (NMS 22)
- boarders are protected from the risk of fire (NMS 26)
- the welfare of any children other than the school’s pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school (NMS 28)
- boarders’ safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities (NMS 29)
- boarders’ personal privacy is respected (NMS 37)
- there is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders (NMS 38)
- boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school’s complete recruitment checking procedures; all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises are supervised (NMS 39)
- boarders have their own accommodation, which is secure from public intrusion (NMS 41)
- boarders are protected from safety hazards (NMS 47)

Ofsted considers 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders have access to a range and choice of activities (NMS 11)
- boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination (NMS 18)
- boarders’ welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands (NMS 27)
- boarders have satisfactory provision to study (NMS 43)
- boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas (NMS 46)
Ofsted considers 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

• boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school (NMS 12)
• boarders receive personal support from staff (NMS 14)
• boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families (NMS 19)
• new boarders are introduced to the school’s procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in (NMS 21)
• boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school (NMS 30)
• there are sound relationships between staff and boarders (NMS 36)

Ofsted considers 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

• boarders’ possessions and money are protected (NMS 20)
• boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation (NMS 40)
• boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation (NMS 42)
• boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities (NMS 44)
• boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day (NMS 45)
• boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school (NMS 50)

Ofsted considers 51 the key standard to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

• a suitable statement of the school’s principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
• there is clear leadership of boarding in the school (NMS 8)
• crises affecting boarders’ welfare are managed effectively (NMS 9)
• the school’s organisation of boarding contributes to boarders’ welfare (NMS 10)
• risk assessment and school record-keeping contribute to boarders’ welfare (NMS 23)
• boarders are supervised adequately by staff (NMS 31)
• staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site (NMS 32)
• boarders are adequately supervised at night (NMS 33)
• boarders are looked after by staff which have specific boarding duties, and have received adequate induction and continued training (NMS 34)
• boarders are looked after by staff which follow clear boarding policies and practice (NMS 35)
• the welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 51)
• the welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

Ofsted considers 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.