

Kingsmead School

Inspection report for Boarding School

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Inspector	Julia Toller
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Kingsmead School, 6-12 Bertram Drive, WIRRAL, Merseyside, CH47 0LL
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Registered person	Board of Governors
Head/ Principal	Mr Mark Gibbons
Nominated person	Mr Mark Gibbons
Date of last inspection	26/01/2006

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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

This is a boarding school located in a residential area with good access to public transport and local amenities.

Boarding accommodation is provided in two settings for boys and girls separately. Both are in close proximity to the school and allow easy access for those living in boarding.

Facilities for girls is in single bedrooms, but there are some shared bedrooms in the boys' house. Both have shared bathing and shower facilities and access to basic kitchen areas for the preparation of snacks.

Summary

The overall quality rating is inadequate - notice of action to improve.

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

This was an announced key inspection and formed part of an aligned inspection with the Independent Schools Inspectorate and the EYFS framework. All key standards were inspected. This is an inadequate service overall.

Boarders benefit from positive relationships with staff, they are afforded a range of facilities and opportunities to encourage and support a healthy lifestyle, to develop their life skills and to reach good outcomes from education.

However, there are a number of shortfalls, for example, in staff recruitment, training for staff about safeguarding, risk assessments regarding young people including fire safety, and sanctions that place young people at risk. In addition, there are no arrangements in place for either the school or board of governors to monitor the welfare of boarders.

Boarding staff are not offered regular supervision or training. They have however developed effective relationships with boarders that help to promote and maintain the safety of boarders.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two recommendations were raised at the last inspection regarding standards of food available to boarders and standards of accommodation for boarders.

At this inspection standards of food were found to be satisfactory with a variety of choices available for boarders. However, boarders say that at times the food is lacking in flavour and that choices are sometimes limited at evenings and weekends.

This will be monitored further at future inspections.

Arrangements for accommodation have been altered for boarders since the last inspection. Some issues remain such as a lack of privacy for boarders in bathrooms and insufficient seating in lounges. This will be monitored further at future inspections.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Boarders experience a caring, and secure relationship with care staff who are committed and supportive. Boarders have a good understanding about matters relating to their health.

Staff are trained in the safe administration of medicines. There are suitable safe storage facilities for medications and medication records are maintained appropriately. This helps to make sure that the health care needs of young people are met safely.

Boarders are encouraged to have healthy and active lifestyles while attending the school. Medication is tightly managed to ensure they receive their prescribed medicines in accordance with their prescribing doctor's instructions. Medicines are securely kept and there is a complete audit trail of medicines into and out of the school.

Mealtimes are sociable occasions. Menus are planned with young people who are offered advice and guidance on how to follow a healthy lifestyle and eat a balanced nutritious diet. However, young people say that the food sometimes lacks flavour, and their access to condiments is limited.

Students are consulted over meal planning and encouraged to develop their independence by getting involved in making their own meals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Staff respect boarders' privacy and confidentiality in a way that is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Young people can make and receive telephone calls in private and are given space and time to be alone when they wish. Although there is a system for the recording of complaints, these are not being recorded and this does not fully safeguard young people.

Staff carry out their roles and responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare. However, not all staff have received training in how to safeguard young people including recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse.

Staff provide a good level of supervision for young people, based on their age and level of understanding, to make sure they are safe in the home and in the community. They give young people good advice about personal safety. Staff respond appropriately to any serious concerns about young people's safety and let parents know about serious events involving young people.

Bullying is not tolerated at the school, young people say that bullying does not take place. If it does happen, young people are clear about who they could go to within boarding and the school staff team, for help and guidance. This helps to keep young people safe.

Staff reassure young people when they are upset and help them deal with their anxieties and frustrations in a positive way. Staff do not condone unacceptable behaviour and assist young people to learn to manage their behaviour and solve problems. However, the practice of regular group sanctions is unacceptable and does not help individual young people to understand the consequences of their inappropriate actions. Such sanctions are not recorded in line with national minimum standards.

Staff have started to develop a range of risk assessments, but these do not address all risks pertinent to young people, they are also not updated regularly to ensure that they reflect the ongoing risks associated with young people. For example boarders travelling on public transport and shopping in local cities.

A fire safety risk assessment has not yet been developed for each of the boarding houses and boarding staff are not being provided with ongoing fire safety training.

Gaps in recruitment procedures such as starting staff without Criminal Records Bureau clearance or the receipt of satisfactory references have placed young people at risk for a significant period of time. In addition a lack of safeguarding training for staff places young people at further risk of harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Boarders are afforded good opportunities to enjoy a range of activities and attend clubs within the community. Although care staff ensure that every student receives individualised support and care, a lack of recording systems make this difficult to assess and does not demonstrate some of the work carried out by boarding staff.

Boarders have the opportunity to make choices, form friendships and enhance independence to maximise their health and well-being. Boarding staff treat students with courtesy and respect. There is a good rapport between boarders and staff which enables boarders to develop their confidence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff recognise the importance of family contact and offer support as necessary. Young people say they use a variety of methods of communication to keep in touch with family and friends, including social network sites. There are not however any systems for monitoring the use of internet by young people to ensure their safety. This does not fully safeguard young people.

Although the rapport between boarders and staff is effective, there is little evidence of formal systems for consultation between boarders the staff and school. This does not ensure that the opinions and views of boarders are heard and acted upon.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff prepare young people for adult life. They are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves, suitable to their age and understanding. They routinely learn skills, such as shopping, cooking, using money and household tasks. They are also encouraged to develop their personal care and their organisational and social skills.

Students are able to personalise their bedrooms to increase their comfort and sustain their identity during their stays. Students are able to socialise and have private time and some improvements have been made in the accommodation provided. However, there remains a lack of privacy for boarders in bathrooms and inadequate seating for boarders in the boarding provision.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The promotion of equality and diversity is inadequate. There is little evidence to demonstrate that the individual needs of young people are identified, and assistance provided when necessary. This does not ensure that the individual needs of young people are met.

The home's Statement of Purpose and children's guide are up to date and reflect the ethos of boarding provision. This means that young people and their parents are provided with appropriate information about the school and boarding provision.

Staff are not receiving regular training or supervision. This does not provide them with an opportunity to discuss their role or any personal development issues they may have. Furthermore staff team meetings do not take place regularly and although staff say they meet regularly with the head of school there is no formal process surrounding these meetings or records of issues discussed. This does not help to

identify any issues within boarding and how they are to be addressed.

The arrangements of lodgings are not ensuring the welfare of boarders is assured; this is with reference to ensuring that all the necessary checks have been carried out.

The boarding provision is not being monitored by either the head of school or the board of governors in line with national minimum standards. This does not promote the welfare of boarders or monitor their safety and welfare.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure that boarders have opportunity to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision (breach of NMS 12.1)
- ensure that there is an effective system for recruiting all staff who will work with boarders that includes all checks in the standard and which can be verified from recruitment records (breach of NMS 38.1)
- ensure school should as, and follows, a fair and appropriate policy on behaviour, discipline and use of punishments, known to boarders, staff and parents. This is with particular reference to not using group sanctions (breach of NMS 4.1)
- ensure that administration of major punishments is recorded in writing in line with the NMS (breach of NMS 4.6)
- ensure that all staff have been given briefing or training on responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse and know what action they should take in response to such suspicions or allegations (breach of NMS 3.5)
- ensure that any off-site short-stay accommodation arranged by the school for any of its boarders provides satisfactory accommodation and supervision, is checked by the school before use (breach of NMS 51.1)
- ensure that a written record is kept of all complaints and their outcome. (breach of NMS 5.5)
- ensure that boarding staff are aware of emergency evacuation procedures from boarding accommodation (breach of NMS 26.1)
- ensure that the school has an effective system of risk assessment, with written records, to identify and reduce risk to boarders from inherent hazards in the school buildings. This is with particular reference to fire safety and environmental risks (breach of NMS 47.9)
- ensure that problems of individual boarders are identified. This is with particular reference to ensuring there are effective recording systems to highlight the work carried out by boarding staff to meet the individual needs of boarders (NMS 17.1)
- ensure that there are systems in place to monitor internet use by boarders (breach of NMS 19.1)

- ensure that the school's governing body or proprietor has a system to monitor welfare provision in the school (breach of NMS 8.2)
- ensure that there are adequate toilet and washing facilities are readily accessible to boarders, with appropriate privacy (breach of NMS 44.1)
- ensure boarders have access to a range and choice of safe recreational areas. This is with particular reference to ensuring there is adequate seating for boarders in the boarding provision (breach of NMS 46.1)
- ensure there is an appropriate process for the regular review of the performance of each member of staff with boarding duties. For example through individual supervision meetings or a staff appraisal system (breach of NMS 34.5)
- ensure that staff are provided with opportunities for receiving updates in boarding practice. For example through staff team meetings. (NMS 34.7)
- ensure systems in place for consultation with young people about choices and standards of food (breach of NMS 12.2)
- ensure that the individual needs of young people in terms of equality and diversity are met. (breach of NMS 18.1)