

# International Stanborough School

Stanborough School, Stanborough Park, Watford WD25 9JT  
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

International Stanborough School accommodates students who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The school provides services to local and international students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The school operates on the principles established by the Seventh Day Adventist Church. It is owned and operated by the British Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists. International Stanborough School is separately registered with the Department for Education, but occupies the same facilities as Stanborough School, which is an independent secondary and boarding school that is inspected by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate. The boarding house is situated in one wing of the main school building, accommodating boys on one floor and girls on another. The boarding school has the capacity to house approximately 70 students in 29 bedrooms.

The last full inspection took place in June 2016.

**Inspection dates:** 27 February to 1 March 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures, which mean that children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Date of last inspection:** 15 June 2016

## Key findings from this inspection

This boarding school is inadequate because:

- Staff and managers have not followed safeguarding policies and protocols to protect children adequately.
- The designated safeguarding lead failed to refer a safeguarding concern to the local authority for over seven weeks.
- Staff who have specific safeguarding responsibilities have not had the necessary training.
- Safeguarding records lack significant information, which makes it difficult to monitor the effectiveness of the actions that staff take to safeguard children.
- Managers were unaware of the significant shortfalls identified at this inspection. Consequently, there is a risk of recurrence because managers do not adequately guide staff or have a good enough understanding of managing safeguarding concerns effectively and promptly.
- The boarding accommodation has not been maintained to an acceptable standard.

## What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

### Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:

- Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders are appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders with restricted mobility. (National minimum standard 5.4)
- 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. (National minimum standard 11.1)

### Recommendations

- Ensure that all staff receive an annual appraisal of their performance.
- Ensure that monitoring of the whole school is effective and identifies and addresses shortfalls.
- Review the Wi-Fi provision to ensure that boarders are able to retain regular contact with their families and friends.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

Systemic safeguarding shortfalls mean that children are at risk of harm and their welfare is not supported effectively. These shortfalls are compounded by a lack of managerial awareness of the shortfalls and a consequential absence of action to address them.

The quality of the boarding accommodation is poor. Rooms have not been maintained to an acceptable standard. In some rooms, paintwork is scratched, ceilings are damaged and doors are broken. This significantly affects the appearance and impression of the rooms. Although managers recognise these shortfalls and have sought quotations for renovation, they have not acted to make the required improvements.

Recently, the children who board have tended to stay on a short-term basis. They are international students. They said that they make progress with their English skills and enjoy their time at the school. Children generally achieve the targets that they are set, and some children exceed their targets.

The boarding staff link with school staff to monitor children's progress. The head of boarding attends parents' evenings when parents are unable to attend.

The children spoke positively of the staff who support them. The children spoke of boarding staff being warm and approachable. The children can identify adults with whom they can share concerns. Information about independent people with whom they can talk is readily available around the school site. However, children reported frequent issues with the Wi-Fi, which they said has an impact on their ability to contact their friends and family.

The children said that they enjoy the social, educational and recreational opportunities available to them. These include activities based in the school grounds and occasional trips further afield. The staff support the children to engage in healthy activities.

Children's behaviour in boarding is generally good. The staff talked about how they support children who are feeling frustrated or angry.

The children said that they were welcomed positively when they arrived at the school. They said that they felt welcome from the moment that they were picked up at the airport.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate**

The management team does not follow safeguarding procedures or ensure that staff follow them. Serious failings mean that children are at risk of harm because staff do not act on concerns with urgency.

The children in boarding said that they feel safe. However, the systems designed to keep them safe have not been followed by staff or safeguarding leads. This does not promote the children's safety or reduce the risk of harm. In one incident, a number of teaching staff failed to follow safeguarding procedures in response to an allegation of abuse. This included designated safeguarding staff. As a result, an allegation of abuse that should have been shared with relevant agencies within 24 hours was not shared for almost eight weeks. Despite this, managers have not carried out any work to support or guide the staff who did not follow safeguarding procedures. As a result, no action has been taken to lessen the likelihood of this happening again. In addition, despite the allegation being upheld, no formal support or guidance was provided to the member of staff against whom the allegation was made. These systemic failings do not safeguard children or staff.

In another incident, the management team's response to a specific safeguarding concern lacked depth and clarity. The actions taken in response to the concern were punitive and lacked consideration of the pressures that the child may have been under. A victim-blaming approach does not safeguard children and lessens the likelihood that children will come forward to share concerns in the future.

The head of boarding writes risk assessments for the boarders. These assessments relate to sharing rooms. They are kept up to date and signed off by the headteacher.

No children have gone missing from the boarding provision. The staff understand the process to follow if a child does go missing.

Children behave well in the boarding provision. There are very few incidents. The staff have not had to use physical intervention. The staff use de-escalation techniques to support children who are frustrated or angry.

The children said that bullying is not a problem in the boarding provision. They said that the staff are kind and caring and will not tolerate bullying. The children talked about a multi-national and inclusive feel to the boarding provision.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

Senior managers lack awareness of the serious safeguarding shortfalls. This lack of awareness and insight means that action has not been taken to reduce the likelihood of such errors occurring again.

The management team has not ensured that designated staff have stayed up to date with their training as required by statutory guidance. No central records of training exist. Neither of the deputy designated safeguarding leads has had designated

safeguarding lead training for over two years. The designated safeguarding lead, appointed to the role on 15 June 2018, undertook a six-hour online course on the first day of the inspection. Lack of timely training means that staff who have specific safeguarding responsibilities are not well enough equipped to safeguard children effectively.

The quality of safeguarding records is poor. It is difficult to ascertain what has happened, what has been done, by whom and for what reason. Records offer little value to those whose role it is to monitor the quality of care, such as governors, and would provide even less value to children if they want to access those records in the future. Poor record-keeping, slow sharing of concerns and failure to follow procedures are symptomatic of the poor understanding of safeguarding processes and are compounded by a lack of training.

In one instance, staff provided a reference for a child who was permanently excluded following serious incidents at the linked school. The reference is misleading and does not contain significant information. As a result, anyone who receives the reference may not be apprised of relevant safeguarding concerns.

Governors undertake visits to the school. They have sought assurances from children that they understand how to raise concerns and know who the safeguarding leads are. The head of boarding provides reports to the governors. However, governors have not identified the shortfalls relating to safeguarding that were picked up during this inspection, and the reports have not detailed the shortfalls.

The head of boarding is respected and valued by staff and children. Children frequently named him when asked about whom they could talk to if they were worried or concerned. He has a good rapport with the children.

The boarding staff feel well supported by the head of boarding. They feel able to offer suggestions and challenges to the head of boarding, who responds positively to them. The boarding staff have had training in understanding radicalisation, safeguarding, first aid and other areas. Formal supervisions have recently been introduced.

The head of boarding has not had an appraisal despite being in post for several years. This does not provide him with the support that he needs to carry out his role.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Boarding school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC019554

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mrs Eileen Hussey

**Type of school:** Boarding school

**Telephone number:** 01923 673268

**Email address:** ehussey@spsch.org

## **Inspector**

Ashley Hinson: social care inspector



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