

Hazlegrove Preparatory School

Inspection report for boarding school

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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

Hazlegrove is an independent boarding and day preparatory school for 320 boys and girls aged two and a half through to 13 years of age. Currently there are 111 boarders aged between seven and 13 years of age, of whom 32 are flexi boarders. The school has three residential houses which separately accommodate senior boys, junior boys and girls. Each residential house is managed by a house parent couple who live in separate accommodation within the boarding houses, as does the matron and gap students. The school has four gap students. The school is set within 200 acres of parkland in Somerset and has direct access to the A303. The campus includes a purpose built, self contained pre-prep and nursery. It shares a Board of Governors with King's School, Bruton which is approximately nine miles away. A total of 27 school staff live on the school grounds.

Summary

This was an announced inspection of the school. The inspection was conducted by two inspectors over a period of three days. The inspectors were able to interview staff including the headmaster, assistant headmaster (pastoral), boarding co-ordinator, boarding governor, house parents, bursar, teaching staff, the school's matron, catering and maintenance personnel and gap students. Inspectors also held informal meetings with groups of variously aged boarders and joined the students for breakfast, lunch and supper. Inspectors had access to all residential units and to the school grounds. The inspectors had access to policies and logs, student files and personnel records. As part of the inspection process parents and staff were offered the opportunity to anonymously complete pre-inspection questionnaires, with 22 questionnaires received by inspectors. Judgements contained in this report are made from evidence obtained from pre-inspection material, from that gathered during the inspection and taken into account were the views and experience of the boarders accommodated at the school.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Information on the school's anti bullying policy has been incorporated into the guide which is made available to parents and guardians. Information on the school's reward and sanctions policy has been incorporated into the guide which is made available to parents and guardians. The school has obtained a copy of the Somerset Area Child Protection Committee handbook. The school has reviewed its policy on the making of complaints. The boarder's guide provides age appropriate information on how to make a complaint and parents are provided with Ofsted contact details. The school has reviewed its Crisis Management Policy which has been made specific to the needs of Hazlegrove. Information as to how boarders may access the school's independent listener is included in the boarder's guide. The telephone number of the independent listener is found both in the boarder's guide and in the student's diary. The school provides age appropriate information for potential boarders which is contained in The Blue Book for Boarders. An appropriate control mechanism has been introduced negating the need to wedge fire doors open. An improved system for the monitoring of student's whereabouts after school has been introduced. All staff are seen to have either a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check or certificate of good conduct from their country of origin before

commencing in post. Measures have been taken to ensure the safety of students whilst members of the public are using the school's sporting facilities.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The school's medical policy and policy for the administration of medicines and treatment provide information as to procedures to be followed if a student has an asthma attack or requires treatment for minor cuts and grazes. Both policies were reviewed in September 2007 and are considered satisfactory. It is expected that boarders register with the school doctor who visits weekly, but they also have access during the week to the school nurse, to matrons at weekends and to other specialists services as considered necessary. A local optician visits the school annually and boarders are encouraged to visit their own dentist during school holidays. If unwell, boarders are cared for in the sick bay which has three beds and is attached to the school's medical bay. Pupils' medical records are stored securely in the medical bay. First Aid boxes are located in residential houses and the school kitchen, and are routinely checked by the nurse. The nurse is also responsible for maintaining the incident and accident log which records details of incidents that have required the hospitalisation of a student. Storage of medication both in the medical bay and residential houses is considered appropriate. However it is observed that as recording of medication administered to a boarder can occur in both locations, it can be difficult to get an overview of that administered to an individual student. It is also reported that matrons have not received training in medication administration, and that residential houses employ different recording systems. The school has a list of homely medications that can be given without prior consultation with the nurse and at a house parent's discretion. The list which includes calamine lotion, cough mixtures and Paracetamol as appropriate. Parental permission for the administration of homely medications and the provision of emergency medical care, is found in students' files. The school nurse assumes responsibility for organising first aid training which is provided by St John's Ambulance or the Red Cross. Training is provided for matrons, house parents, kitchen and grounds personnel and other relevant staff, and is updated every three years. Staff have not however received training in infection control and the Infection Control handbook is not found in residential houses, although the nurse raises the importance of hand hygiene during school assemblies. Although bedwetting and soiling is dealt with sensitively and discreetly, residential houses do not have sluice facilities. As laundry is centrally managed, alternative arrangements for the laundering of wet and soiled linen which may further promote infection control, were discussed with matrons and the headmaster. The school might also consider changing boarder's bed linen weekly rather than fortnightly. Age appropriate health protection issues are addressed in school through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) classes, with topics including bullying, friendship, road safety, first aid, sex education, self image, alcohol, drugs and smoking. Informal discussion of these issues is also conducted by the senior house parent. Although catering was previously undertaken by a commercial firm, this is no longer the situation, although the kitchen continues to appropriately apply some of its procedures, for example the daily recording of fridge and freezer temperatures, the probing of food and the sampling of meals. Menus for the school currently operate on a four week rolling basis, with an emphasis placed upon obtaining food from local suppliers. At lunch there is always a hot vegetarian option and salad bar, with parents reporting meals to be balanced, healthy and nutritious. Fresh fruit is also routinely available at lunch and breakfast. The school's food committee, which includes day and boarder representatives, provides an opportunity for students to influence menu construction. It is also reported that the kitchen provides special occasion meals, for example the Easter feast, for boarders. Tuck for boarders is stored in the

office of residential houses and is made available on two nights each week. The school's kitchen is described as a nut free zone and caters for a number of young people who have a food allergy. Evidence is seen in the kitchen of photographs of specific young people together with their particular needs. Where necessary, further clarification is also sought as to types of acceptable and unacceptable foods, with parents asked to complete a detailed questionnaire. Medication for the treatment of food allergies is not located in the kitchen but in the staffroom, which gives ready access to the dining hall. It is noted that the environmental health check conducted in May 2007 reports 'a well run kitchen', although the report also required that some maintenance work be conducted. A return visit in October 2007 confirms however that the majority of this work has been undertaken. Training certificates provide evidence that all kitchen staff undertook training in food safety in November 2006, and that first aid training was undertaken in September 2006.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The school's anti bullying policy which has been recently amended to include the subject of cyber bullying is considered appropriate. Where bullying is reported, the incident is logged in either the school or house day book, relevant personnel are informed and the incident discussed with the pupils involved. Students are also encouraged to complete a 'worry sheet', passing the sheet to a member of staff. It is noted that there is no confidential drop or box into which pupils may 'post' concerns, however the Child line telephone number and that of the independent listener is found in the school's Autumn 2007 diary which is given to each pupil. Students report that if bullying occurs it is quickly and effectively addressed and parents comment positively on the school's policy, which is seen as empowering. The school has a designated child protection officer. Its child protection policy was reviewed September 2007 as were policies for physical contact between staff and pupils and whistle-blowing, with all documents considered appropriate. Evidence however is not available to indicate that the school's policy has been shared with the local area child protection committee for comment and approval, although it has a copy of local procedures. Although all staff undertake a review of the school's policy, evidence of more comprehensive training in child protection for specific staff is not present. The school has clearly written procedures for pupils who are off site without permission. Appropriate behaviour is seen to be encouraged in residential houses through the use of a 'noughts and crosses' chart on dormitory doors. The charts encourage behaviour such as tidy dorms, and ensure that students learn that individual behaviour may impact upon an entire dorm. Rewards for positive behaviour include the use of the Playstation, with sanctions such as early bed, used for unsociable behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded by the residential house in day books (daily logs), and where appropriate, behaviour modification may be introduced through the setting of behavioural targets and the use of a target card. It is noted that staff training in restraint techniques has not been undertaken. It is however reported that training in management of challenging behaviour, for example in use of diversion techniques, might be helpful. The school's policy on behaviour and discipline which was reviewed in September 2007 is considered appropriate, and emphasises the school's approach of encouraging good behaviour rather than simply punishing bad behaviour. Parents record that strong pastoral care in the residential houses helps to reinforce positive behaviour. The school's complaints procedure was reviewed September 2007 and is considered appropriate and satisfactory. It is noted that parents are provided with contact details for Ofsted who may be approached in the event that school fails to satisfactorily address concerns. Weekly house meetings for boarders which are minuted, allow for the airing of issues of concern. The boarders quide is also seen to contain information on making a complaint. Although the school has a designated fire officer, he has not participated in fire officer training and does not conduct regular training for staff in fire prevention. However, evidence is seen of a weekly testing of fire alarms, routine equipment tests and students report regular practice of fire evacuation procedures, including night time evacuation. With the headmaster reporting that an appropriate control mechanism for fire doors has been introduced in the reporting period, the need to wedge fire doors open is now negated. The school was inspected by the fire service in March 2006. The school leases three minibuses which are routinely maintained by a lease company. It is noted that staff who drive the minibuses must be over 25 years of age and must undertake training by an approved training agency. Annual health and safety checks of all areas of the school are carried out in an organised manner, with a review currently underway. It is however noted, that showers in one residential house (Lancaster) cause water to collect on the floor, creating a risk of slipping. As previously reported, all residential houses are locked at night and security alarms are activated. However inspectors were told of a recent intrusion onto school grounds by unauthorised personnel, and although the welfare of pupils was never at risk, it is noted that the school does not employ surveillance equipment nor has key coding of access doors to residential houses been installed. Evidence is seen of an effective vetting and recruitment method employed by the school. Four personnel files, including that of one gap student were reviewed, showing that either enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks are performed, or that a police certificate of good conduct from country of origin is obtained before unsupervised access to students is allowed. Appropriate documentation is included in personnel files including job descriptions, copies of the school's disciplinary procedure, personal references and health disclosures. It is reported that all contract staff entering the school must have a CRB check. The headmaster also reports that an improved system for identifying visitors to the school site has been introduced, with an increased emphasis upon the signing-in procedure and use of a visitors' badge.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

It is reported that prior to admission each pupil receives an invitation to an overnight visit at the school which allows for an academic assessment to be undertaken and specific learning support needs to be identified. The school is registered with the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils (CReSTeD), with the May 2006 report recording that the school 'integrates children with a wide variety of special needs and successfully integrates them into the school community'. The support and guidance provided by the learning support team is also positively evaluated by parents. Four non-English boarders are also accommodated by the school, but all are reported to speak and understand English well, and require no specific support. The school has however appointed a member of staff responsible for students where English is an additional language. A nominated member of staff also assumes responsibility for the welfare of those students identified as talented and gifted. The files of four boarders were reviewed and are seen to contain relevant documentation. Where a statement of special education needs exists, evidence is provided of an individual education plan which identifies specific targets and details methods and approaches for their achievement. Evidence of the plan's regular review is also included. The school has a good reputation for sporting achievements, and whilst there is a collegiate feel students do not feel pressured into achieving sporting objectives. All contact sports taking place on the games fields are supported by access to the school nurse and the provision of first aid boxes. Staff who oversee sports have also all been first aid trained. In addition to sport, a range of activities are offered both after school

and at weekends, with evidence seen of a list of activities for the forthcoming weekend posted on the dining room door. After school activities include cooking, puppet making, Scottish dancing, bee keeping, go karts and drama. On Saturday nights it is reported that a film is shown for the boarders, with the event conducted in an informal family style manner. Parents report that their children are relaxed and happy at the school, and busy without being pressured. Inspectors too, noted that students appear happy and respectful of each other. The role of the independent listener which was introduced in September 2007, was discussed with the headmaster. Although the appointment is not strictly independent, with the role assumed by the governor responsible for boarding at Hazlegrove, the relevance of a familiar figure is acknowledged as important for the age range of students accommodated at the school. The independent listener whose contact details as noted above, are provided in the school diary given to all students, reports intending to visit each residential house once a year, and will endeavour to be present at house meetings in order to increase exposure to boarders. Boarders may also complete a 'worry sheet' if there are concerns they wish to discuss, or speak directly to house parents, prefects or the school's head girl/boy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

It is reported that each residential house conducts a weekly house meeting which is minuted, and this allows for discussion of issues relevant to the operation of each house. Although there is no school council, the activities of the food committee, which includes representatives of the boarding population, allows for specific comment on school menus. Consultation with boarders is generally informal, although the appointment of prefects and a head boy and girl provide further opportunities for raising and addressing issues of concern. While it is observed that some of the older students have mobile phones that allow for family contact, younger students do not. However boarders have ready access to pay phones in the residential houses which are seen to allow for private conversation. It is noted that the girls residential house does not currently have a pay phone, but that this is to be installed in the near future. Where students have mobile phones these are given to residential staff in the evening for safe keeping. The school's information and technology (IT) suite is opened twice each week for the sending and receiving of emails. Appropriate safeguards govern access to internet sites. While unrestricted watching of television is discouraged, older students are nevertheless encouraged to watch the news before going into school. It is understood that many parents consider communication with the school both by letter, telephone and email to be good and that direct access to tutors or residential house staff is encouraged. Formal meetings between staff and parents of boarders are held twice each year. School social events, sports matches, school concerts and plays also provide an informal opportunity for parents to meet with staff. On arrival at the school, new boarders are allocated a 'buddy' who assumes responsibility for showing the new student the layout of the school and introducing him/her to school procedures. The buddy system, which is appreciated by students, operates for the first week, but is individually determined thereafter. The observed relationship between staff and pupils is warm, friendly, caring and respectful with boarders reporting that they are well looked after. Parents too comment upon an atmosphere of respect and consideration for others. As the headmaster observes the school's approach is based on 'relationship rather than rules, and principles rather than procedures'. It is noted that birthdays are observed and celebrated in each residential house.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

As previously reported, there are three residential houses separately accommodating girls, junior and senior boys. It is noted however that there has been considerable work recently undertaken to the houses, with a new boarding house for 40 girls opened in the summer of 2007, repairs to the roof of another residential house undertaken, along with general redecoration and provision of new beds. In consequence, houses appear well furnished and maintained, warm, welcoming and friendly with each kept in a homely but tidy manner. The use of bunk beds in some dormitories, has not led to overcrowding. Evidence is seen of pin boards above beds allowing for personalisation and soft toys are also evident. It is noted that all first floor windows have restricted openings to ensure safety. All three residential houses have appropriate changing, washing and toilet facilities and assurance is given that locks to toilets and bathroom doors that do not provide external access in the event of an emergency will be immediately changed. Boarders report that they bring their own toilet requisites but that the school keeps some stock should a student require additional supplies. As prep is undertaken in classrooms, desks and chairs for personal study are not routinely included in the houses, but each has its own common room, although a common room for senior boys and girls has recently been withdrawn to provide additional residential accommodation. It is observed that boarders are able to bring lockable trunks to the school for the safekeeping of personal possessions, and that these are kept in dormitories. Boarders report that at the beginning of each half term pocket money is given by parents to residential staff for safe keeping, with some re-issued on a weekly basis. Students report that all receive approximately the same amount of pocket money.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school does not have a statement of purpose, preferring to contain all necessary information in its prospectus and guides. The guides for parents and students provide information on the attitudes, values and organisation of the school, together with anti bullying and rewards and sanctions policies and an outline of facilities and pastoral support available for boarders. The boarder's quide, referred to as The Blue Book for Boarders, is seen to include age appropriate information on the school's approach to bulling and how to make a complaint. Boarding principles and practice were reviewed August 2007. The school shares a board of governors with King's School, Bruton, which is responsible for overseeing activities. Appointed to this board is a governor with specific responsibility for the welfare of boarders at Hazlegrove. The governor, who as noted above acts as the school's independent visitor, aims to visit each of the residential houses once each year and expects to attend house meetings. The school has recently appointed an assistant headmaster (pastoral) who also assumes the role of senior house parent. The headmaster's wife also has specific responsibilities for the management of boarding provision and there is a weekly minuted meeting of house parents and the headmaster's wife to discuss boarding practice and needs. A weekly staff meeting of academic staff also allows for the discussion of specific boarding issues. The crisis management policy provides a specific and appropriate contingency plan for Hazlegrove, although it dates from 2005. Evidence is seen of appropriate risk assessment of planned activities and trips and it is noted that the school's swimming pool is subject to regular safety checks which are conducted by the maintenance staff. Parents report that the school strikes a good balance between being risk adverse and allowing pupils to challenge themselves. Although the inspection report of January 2005 expressed concern at public use of sporting facilities at the school (swimming pool, tennis and squash courts), the headmaster reports that use of these facilities is not currently permitted until after 8pm, in an attempt to remove the possibility of unauthorised access to students.

Consideration is also being given to the development of the swimming pool area in order to provide a completely separate access to the pool by swimming club members. In order also to improve the supervision of students, the headmaster reports that very specific areas of the campus have been designated for appropriate after school activities, although it is acknowledged that the lighting of this area could be improved. The school's procedure for pupils off site without permission is considered satisfactory. The school has a duty rota for all residential houses which provides appropriate levels of staff and gender mix in the boys' houses and an appropriate number of female staff in the girl's residential house. The school has four gap students all of whom live on campus and feel well integrated into the community of the school. They report receiving appropriate induction and participate in inset training offered to other staff. The school provides house parents with access to training courses run by the Independent Boarding Schools Association. Courses include the induction of gap students and working with parents. The school also ensures that training is provided in first aid, that the child protection policy is reviewed and that where necessary lifeguard courses are undertaken. A systematic induction programme for those staff with boarding responsibilities that also covers training in fire prevention and the prevention of bullying is not however evident. It is noted that the school has reviewed its annual staff appraisal process which now includes a formal observation of practice for house parents. Evidence is not available to indicate that formal one to one supervision on a routine basis is occurring, although regular informal contact is reported.

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.

Standard	Action	Due date
17	ensure training for house parents and matrons is undertaken in infection control	31 December 2007
3	ensure that the school's child protection policy is shared with the local area child protection committee for comment and approval, where this has not been undertaken	31 December 2007
26	ensure that the designated fire officer undertakes appropriate training in fire prevention	31 December 2007
26	ensure that the designated fire officer provides regular and routine instruction for all staff in fire prevention strategies	31 December 2007
41	undertake a review of external security arrangements, ensuring that boarding accommodation is protected from unauthorised access	31 December 2007
44	ensure that locks to bathroom and toilet doors provide external access in the event of an emergency	31 December 2007
47	ensure that action is taken to prevent water from showers in residential houses from pooling on floors	31 December 2007

Recommendations

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

- consideration might be given to alternative solutions to the laundering of wet and soiled linen (NMS 17)
- consideration might be given to obtaining copies of the Infection Control handbook for each residential house (NMS 17)
- consideration might be given to the changing of boarder's bed linen on a weekly basis (NMS 49)
- consideration might be given to the use of a standarised system for the recording of medication administration (NMS 15)
- consideration might be given to the training of all residential staff in medicine administration (NMS 15)
- consideration might be given to providing more detailed training in child protection for the school nurse
- consideration might be given to the introduction of training in the management of challenging behaviour (NMS 4)
- consideration might be given to expanding the induction training package available to residential staff (NMS 34)

Annex A

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.

Annex A

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.