

Skegness Grammar School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Date of last inspection	16 November 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 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

Skegness Grammar School (SGS) is a co-educational, selective school based in the town of Skegness. SGS caters for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years and there are 723 pupils in the school of whom 47 are boarders. Boarding provision was introduced to the school in 1994. The boarding house is an Edwardian country house set in parkland and is known as Wainfleet Hall. Wainfleet Hall is located in the nearby town of Wainfleet five miles from the school. There are regular, daily train services that provide transport to and from the boarding house and the school. Additionally the house has its own mini bus. The boarding house staff comprises of live- in house parents, one house parent is part-time, a resident activities assistant, a part-time matron and a housekeeper. There are also two tutors to assist with preparatory each day on a rota basis in addition to the kitchen, cleaning and laundry staff.

Summary

This inspection was conducted in line with the three yearly statutory frequency for boarding schools. This inspection examined the key standards and reviewed progress on the recommended actions made at the previous inspection. The previous inspection outlined 24 recommendations, significant progress has been made on the majority of these and this has been reflected within the report. Nine recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Firm improvements have been made to ensure all staff have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check before they start work in the boarding house. A safeguarding briefing has taken place for all staff and further statutory training is planned for the deputy head in the next week. The school have invested in improving the physical conditions and the security of the boarding house. The house is pleasant and welcoming. Information is now available to boarders and parents on discipline, punishments and the complaint process. Induction, role descriptions and boarding policies are available for all boarding staff. A crisis management plan is in place and risk assessments are in development. Senior management visits are undertaken to the boarding house. Some stability has been achieved as the house parents begin their third year in the boarding house, this is an improvement from the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Boarders benefit from healthy nutritious menus planned by committed catering staff. Boarders in the main recognise that the food is healthy and balanced, however, they express strong views about portion sizes and variety. The formal consultation opportunities for boarders is limited therefore creating some dissatisfaction in general about food. Sufficient food is available each mealtime, menus are varied and boarders have opportunity for snacks, such as toast in the evening in their own kitchen. Cooks cater for individual special needs and diets. Boarders benefit from regular support with their health needs and generally feel well cared for. First aid treatment, advice and support with health appointments is available from the matron and house staff. Arrangements are in place for boarders taken ill at school and a well-stocked medical room with safe arrangements for medication is available. Records support boarders' health needs,

however, it is not always possible to determine why boarders require treatment, for example, two separate records detail treatment for a swollen lip and a puncture wound to knee. Records did not detail the events leading to the need for treatment to ensure all welfare needs are considered. Boarders have support with individual needs, such as 'homesickness' but actions are not always in records.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Boarding house staff are committed to protecting boarders from bullying. Staff are aware of the policies and the actions to take if they suspect bullying. Boarders' views and experiences of bullying differ and views on whether bullying is addressed also differ creating some difficulty in assessing the overall picture. Support systems, such as the 'bully box' and independent listener are not used by boarders creating an impression for staff of no issues in this area. Some records support actions that are taken when bullying is identified or reported, however, medical records contain details of treatments given to boarders for injuries without an explanation for their cause or where this happened. A small sample of questionnaires received mention racism, the information provided is not in detail or specific. No information has come to light to form judgements and comment. Overall addressing bullying is taken seriously and there is a strong commitment from senior management to look into the divergence in views from boarders and the information raised. Safeguarding procedures have not always been fully understood resulting in procedure shortfalls and the internal investigation of a child protection allegation. Protection for boarders has improved due to safeguarding awareness training increasing the staff team's knowledge to ensure boarders' welfare and safety is fully prioritised. Further statutory safeguarding training is to take place for the deputy head who will resume the child protection officer role following this. An anonymous complaint has been received during this inspection, the information has been explored and the necessary actions will be taken. Sanctions are clearly understood and mainly considered fair, boarders are aware of the rules and what sanctions can be received for misbehaviour, for example, lines are given for untidy rooms and not settling at night. Boarders and staff are clear on the agreed sanctions and feel these are usually consistently given. Records show that sanctions are not consistently recorded in one place resulting in difficulties for management overview of practice. On some occasions punishments for behaviour in the boarding house have been carried into the school, for example, boarders making a noise in their rooms given five detentions and lines in the school. This is not consistent with the school's policy. Improvements have been made to the fire alarm system for the protection of boarders and staff. The fire assessment is complete and has been approved by the fire officer. Boarders are aware of the fire drill procedures and understand their responsibilities. Records show a recent test has been carried out, however, there are gaps in fire drills and weekly tests overall. Overall the need for boarders' privacy is recognised and respected, for example, staff knock on bedroom doors. Improvements have been made to shower doors to provide more privacy. One shower room seen did not have a lock which some boarders felt uncomfortable with, this action was agreed immediately during the visit. Records show there are robust arrangements in place for the recruitment and selection of staff. All staff have an enhanced criminal records check to promote the safe care for boarders. Some shortfalls are noted in the recording of telephone calls to follow up written references. Boarders are protected by robust arrangements for the management of visitors to the boarding house. Boarders report most visits needed for maintenance work happen when they are in school. Although written guidance is not available staff are clearly aware of their roles and responsibilities when visitors are present. Specific arrangements are in place for the house parent or bursar to supervise visitors if boarders

are present. The visitor's book is detailed and evidences only necessary visits happen. Boarders safety is promoted through improved security measures in the boarding house. CCTV and door codes provide external security. Signs are on display to clarify actions to take if unknown people are in the grounds, the house parent takes prompt action. Risk assessments are in place to minimise risks for boarders although more information is needed to fully cover all aspects of risks, for example, the risk assessment for the computer room did not cover the potential risk of internet misuse although measures are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Shortfalls in the activity programme have recently improved and a plan for activities is in place. A resident activities assistant is now employed to facilitate in-house and external activities/excursions, some examples include, Halloween costume design, bingo, a 'pamper night' and a weekend trip to a skateboard park. Most boarders are enthusiastic about the activities plan. Boarders report a variety of people they would seek support from, such as friends, matron, house parents, tutors and house staff. An independent visitor is in place, however, this support is not accessed by pupils, for example one boarder did not feel they would speak to someone they did not know. House staff and tutors are knowledgeable about boarders needs and there are systems in place in the school for boarders, such as personal tutors, although not all boarders understood the personal tutor role. Overseas boarders are supported through a guardian scheme which is organised by parents independently of the school. Policies are in place to promote equality and equal opportunities for all boarders. Some differences in views between female and male boarders are expressed in relation to activities, support and a view from girls that boys are 'favoured'. These views have been fully explored and there is no evidence to support this, however, there is a commitment to explore the girls' perceptions further.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Positive systems are in place to consult with young people, however, these have not continued on a regular basis resulting in the boarders not always feeling listened to or that they have opportunity to formally make changes. Last year questionnaires completed by boarders led to several positive changes, for example, frosted screens in the showers, new plasma television and a decorated games room with air hockey, pool and music system. A house council has been set up with a male and female representative from each year, however, due to staff changes this has not happened each half term as planned. A recent meeting has been held and the house parents intend for this to continue. Boarders can contact family and friends by email, private public telephones in the house and personal mobile telephones. Some difficulties can happen with email access due to the system installed, this is beyond the house staff's control. The house landline is also available for boarders use if needed.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Accommodation provided for boarders is bright, airy and feels homely. Bedrooms are newly decorated and each has a wash basin. Sufficient toilets and showers meet the standards. Communal areas have been refurbished, for example, the games room and small sitting area, these have a modern, contemporary feel. A television room with a large plasma screen and

newly covered seats is in place for 'movie nights'. Some boarders wanted this room to be available more often, a fair rota for each year is in place. Regular maintenance is undertaken including a programme to replace external windows. A caretaker is employed and this ensures regular daily maintenance tasks are completed, for example, replacing toilet seats. There are no lodging arrangements to consider.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The school prospectus, boarding policies, complaints and contracts outline the relevant information for parents in respect of boarding. Some details in the documents need updating due to staff changes including a newly appointed headmaster. Boarders are clear on the expectations within boarding and can explain these thoroughly. A governors' boarding committee is held regularly and minutes evidence that matters, such as policies, security and staffing are discussed. Governor visits have taken place to the boarding house and the head master has completed checks of boarding records. Shortfalls in record keeping and detail in the risk assessments do not provide a complete picture of the practice within the boarding house. Management checks of boarding have not included actions to meet the shortfalls in record keeping or the patterns of injuries identified in medical records requiring treatment from matron. Supervision levels meet the standards, boarders know who is responsible for them and that agreement to do preparatory in their rooms for older boarders is on 'trust'. Boarding staff are clear on their roles and have received induction by the house parents. Specific training is not in place for boarding staff, however, there are plans to address this within a performance management process this year.

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
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Recommendations

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

- ensure the boarding statement of purpose is up to date and reflects staff changes (NMS 1.3)
- ensure senior management regularly monitor boarding records and risk assessments to ensure compliance with standards (NMS 23)
- ensure there is an appropriate policy on child protection and response to allegations which is consistent with the local safeguarding procedures and is known to all levels of staff with boarding responsibilities.(NMS 3.1)
- explore thoroughly with boarders their views on bullying and take any necessary action based upon the outcome of this (NMS 2.5)

- ensure direct contact is made with each referee to verify references (38.2)
- ensure detailed records are maintained of any accidents and injuries to boarders with an explanation of what happened and any actions taken (NMS 15.3)
- ensure sanctions are recorded in one central record and any sanction from the boarding house is not carried out within the school (NMS 4)
- ensure regular fire drills (at least one per term) and any weekly fire tests are recorded (NMS 26)
- ensure formal and regular opportunities for boarders to express their views on relevant aspects of boarding (NMS 12.2).

Annex

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.