

St Peter's / St Olave's School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Marcia Mackey / David Martin
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Date of last inspection	6 December 2004

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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

St. Peter's / St. Olave's school is a co-educational boarding school. The school is situated within walking distance of the centre of the City of York and is close to local shops and amenities. Boarding pupils are accommodated in five boarding houses, one of which is reserved solely for the younger boarders from St. Olave's school.

Summary

This was an announced inspection which involved an assessment of the school's performance in all outcome areas. The visit included a review of recommendations made at the previous inspection, the details of which are outlined in the section below. St Peter's / St Olave's provides an outstanding quality of care for boarding pupils. Boarders' health and well-being are actively safeguarded and promoted by the school. Relationships between boarders and staff are excellent and boarders have a highly positive experience of school life.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to make improvements to its safeguarding and health practices. The school has taken the following action to address these recommendations: All staff, including ancillary, are now provided with child protection training and this assists in safeguarding boarders from harm. Boarders with specific health needs have individual welfare plans which ensure that they receive appropriate and consistent health care from the school. The systems for storing and administering medication have been improved and this means that boarders' health and wellbeing is safeguarded. Male and female boarders have separate bathing facilities in the sanatorium, which improves their level of privacy. The school has replaced fire equipment and boarders are now able to evacuate boarding areas quickly in the event of a fire. The school undertakes roll call three times daily to ensure that boarders' whereabouts are known at all times.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The school has a highly proactive approach to health care. Boarders' health needs are assessed on admission and those with specialist health requirements have individual welfare plans which clearly state how they should be cared for by staff. There is excellent communication throughout the whole staff team regarding boarders' health needs and this ensures a consistently high standard of health care. Boarders are actively encouraged to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle. They are given information regarding hazards to health and demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding these issues. The sanatorium is staffed by fully qualified nurses and offers high quality, 24 hour health support. Boarders' wellbeing is further protected by the school's safe approach to the administration of medications and first-aid. Boarders feel very well looked after when they are ill. Meals are of a high standard. Menus are imaginative and include a range of culturally varied options. The school's catering staff have an excellent understanding of nutritional issues and are able to provide well for special dietary requirements. Boarders can contribute their views about meals via the school's food council. They feel that meal provision has improved and is now very good. Boarders said, 'We are looked after really

well when we're ill' and 'They really help you to understand how important it is to have a healthy life and to look after yourself'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school's response to child protection issues is excellent. Staff are highly knowledgeable regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to respond to these. Senior boarding pupils are given safeguarding briefings to ensure that they are able to respond appropriately to disclosures from their peers. Boarders confirm that they feel safe at school and that any issues or concerns are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They feel confident that staff will support them in the event of any concerns and are always able to find someone to confide in if they need to. The school is proactive in ensuring that educational guardians have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) prior to any contact with boarders. This ensures that overseas students are safeguarded while in the care of guardians. There are exceptionally low levels of bullying at the school. There is a strong ethos of peer support throughout all age groups. This is supported by the school's mentor system through which senior boarders support their younger peers. Boarders approve of this system and feel that it offers them a high level of support in the event of bullying. Boarders feel that the school's system for sanctions and disciplines is very fair. They understand the school rules and feel that staff's response to unacceptable behaviour is proportionate. Boarders are very well behaved and the atmosphere in the school is ordered and calm. Boarders feel that the school offers them clear boundaries and guidelines for acceptable behaviour, within a relaxed and positive environment. The quality of health and safety provision at the school is excellent. There are very good risk assessments in place for all activities and the school has a low incidence of accidents and injuries. Boarders undertake regular fire drills and are clear about what to do in the event of an emergency at the school. The school has been rigorous in its approach to protecting boarders from the risk of intruders, including the closure of a public right of way through the school grounds. The school has robust recruitment procedures and all staff, including ancillary and contract staff, are required to have an enhanced CRB check prior to working at the school. The recording of recruitment checks is generally above the minimum standard required, although a reference was missing from one file. Gaps in recruitment processes potentially expose boarders to risk from unsafe adults. Boarders commented, 'There are lots of people around all the time to keep you safe', 'If you're scared you can always find people to talk to' and 'It's not strict but we all know what we are allowed to do and not do'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are actively encouraged to take part in physical activities and feel that there is plenty to occupy them while they are at school. They enjoy taking part in team sports, such as rugby and hockey and are also able to pursue their individual hobbies and interests. Weekend activities for boarders include, for example, theatre and cinema trips, bowling, paint-balling and ice skating. Following consultation with boarders last year, the school now offers a more active weekend programme for juniors and increased leisure time for senior boarders. Seniors are now able to enjoy a lie-in on Sundays and are provided with a late brunch which has replaced the early breakfast. This is very much appreciated and enjoyed. Boarders receive excellent pastoral support and confirm that this is available whenever they need it. School policies and practice reflect a strong commitment to equal opportunities, and all boarders feel they are equally

valued and respected, regardless of age, gender or cultural background. Boarders for whom English is an additional language are given the support they need to integrate fully into school-life. Boarders commented, 'They give us lots to do here like paint-balling, laser quest and the cinema', 'We can do what activities we like but they do encourage you to take part in a sport if you can' and 'There is always someone to talk to if you need help with prep or if you're just fed up'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Relationships between boarders and staff are excellent. House-parents and matrons provide warm, positive support and boarders benefit greatly from their experience, skills and knowledge. The atmosphere in all boarding houses is relaxed and homely. Boarders feel well cared for and speak very highly of the staff who look after them. The school has particular strengths in welcoming new boarders and making them feel a valued part of the school community. Boarding pupils feel that they are treated very well when they join the school and that this helps them to settle in quickly and reduces feelings of homesickness. Boarders are actively encouraged and enabled to take an interest in the outside world. The school has a strong ethos of involvement with the local community, and boarders are regularly engaged in community-based projects. An example of this was the redesign of a local outdoor play-area for children and young people with disabilities. Boarders feel proud of these achievements and are motivated and encouraged by staff's enthusiasm and support. The systems for listening to and obtaining the views of boarders are fully integrated into the running of the school. Boarders are invited to contribute their views in a variety of formal and informal ways. Boarders feel that their views are listened to and that the school makes changes in response to their requests. Examples of this include the improvements in meal provision and the change to weekend routines and activities. The school demonstrates a very positive attitude to boarders' family and parental contact. Boarders can speak to family and friends in private and there are more than sufficient Internet points and telephones for the number of boarders. Parents feel that they are consulted and informed about their children. They greatly appreciate the proactive contact now being made by the boarding house-staff at the beginning of each term to inform them of their child's wellbeing. Boarders said, 'You are really helped to settle in when you're new and this stops you from feeling homesick' and 'They seem to listen to what we say and they change things if we ask'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarding pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at the school and feel that boarding is central to this positive experience. They are very happy with their boarding houses and feel that the quality of boarding accommodation is less important than the experience of being with friends. The accommodation for younger female boarders is very good, with modern and attractively decorated dormitories. Provision for younger male boarders is generally satisfactory but they currently have to walk downstairs to access bathing facilities, which compromises their privacy. The accommodation for the senior pupils is good and has recently improved after a programme of redecoration. Boarders are able to individualise their rooms with posters and photographs and are involved in the choice of colour schemes when dormitories are redecorated. Boarders' comments included 'It's like a home from home but with your friends', 'It's a really good atmosphere' and 'Everyone's really nice'.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a highly effective and coordinated management system. The Headmaster and governing body ensure that the welfare of boarders is given first consideration and they communicate this approach very clearly to staff and boarders. The management of the boarding provision has a high profile in the school, with very clear lines of communication and accountability. Boarders benefit greatly from the experience, skills and knowledge of the boarding staff. The number of staff available for the supervision of boarders is more than sufficient and boarders have no difficulty in finding a member of staff when they need to. The school provides a very clear statement of boarding principles and practice to parents, boarders and staff. There is an adapted version for younger boarding pupils which is presented in a way that they can easily understand. Boarding staff receive a thorough induction to the school's boarding policies and practices as well as regular training to update their skills and knowledge. This ensures that they are able to offer a consistently high standard of care and support to boarders. Boarders are protected by the school's well-prepared contingency plans which address any crises that relate to their welfare.

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 that all required recruitment information is obtained prior to staff's appointment in post and that a record of this is maintained by the school (NMS 38)

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.