

# Kingham Hill School

Inspection report for boarding school

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| <b>Inspector</b>               | Christopher Garrett / Lucy Martin |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key                               |

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| <b>Head / Principal</b>        | Martin John Morris  |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 19 January 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

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|---------------|---|
| 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

Kingham Hill School is an independent school located five miles from the market town of Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire. The school has a strong Christian ethos that is well documented in the school literature. The school prides itself in providing a 'whole life' education and does not overly focus on academic ability as a criteria for joining the school. The school provides boarding and day facilities for both boys and girls. Boarding is provided for a total of 178 boarders. The boarding provision consists of seven boarding houses that are located on the main school site. Four boarding houses provide spaces for 103 boys, two boarding houses provide spaces for 39 females. A junior house provides accommodation for 39 boys and girls. Sizes of the house vary and the numbers of boarders they can accommodate range from 16 to 36. The school is committed to providing boarding provision and to a full boarding model with timetabled lessons on a Saturday morning. The preferred structure for staffing the boarding houses is for a husband and wife being resident houseparents supported by gap students and non-residential tutors.

### Summary

The purpose of this visit was to conduct a full inspection of all of the key National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Some additional standards were also inspected. The inspection was completed over a three day period and was conducted by two Ofsted inspectors and a boarding school additional inspector. There are some significant shortfalls in the scope of existing fire risk assessments, and unresolved issues relating to operations and practice fail to ensure that the boarders are always being fully protected from the risk of fire. The school does not have a vigorous or safe staff recruitment or vetting procedure in place which places boarders at risk. Measures have been made to improve the security and safety of the boarding houses but these are not consistently adhered to. There are some concerns as to how existing maintenance issues within the other houses are being prioritised and the communication between the bursary and boarding team. The current arrangements for the management of the boarding provision need reviewing. Boarders generally feel that they are well cared for. The arrangements for medical support are under review following the appointment of new staff. However, boarders generally feel that they are well looked after if they are unwell. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in regards to keeping boarders safe. This is supported by good policies and procedures. Bullying is not an issue within the school and any concerns are dealt with promptly. There is a clear expectation of what behaviour is acceptable in the school and there is an emphasis on staff encouraging boarders to reflect on their behaviour. Discipline is generally perceived by the boarders as being fair, though the use of group sanctions by some houseparents is felt unfair and should be reviewed. The arrangements made within the school for providing individual support is one of its greatest strengths. Boarders have easy and open access to a range of services, staff and peer supporters. The school has a positive attitude to boarders being able to maintain contact with their parents and family. The school has embarked on an ambitious refurbishment programme which aims to considerably improve the standard of boarding accommodation within the school. The standards achieved in the first house to be complete are outstanding and set a good benchmark for future developments. Relationships between staff and boarders are good and boundaries are evident.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

This section reports only on improvements relating to recommendations set at the previous inspection. The school has been proactive in addressing a number of the recommendations made following the last full boarding inspection held in January 2004. Details of how these had been addressed were provided during a follow up visit undertaken by the Commission of Social Care Inspection in November 2004. No further recommendations were made at that time. A recommendation that was still in the process of being addressed related to the school's complaint procedure. The school was recommended it ensured that its complaints procedure is circulated to parents and boarders. Copies of the complaints procedure are now included in the pre-admission documentation sent out to parents and is also available on the school website. Information about how boarders can raise concerns is included in their boarding house handbooks along with details of helpline numbers which are also displayed in the boarding houses. These steps ensure boarders and parents are able to raise complaints and concerns about the care of their children. Two recommendations that have not been fully implemented relate to the security of the boarding houses and the improvement to the lighting on the campus. These issues are covered by new recommendations made following this inspection.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Boarders' health is promoted through a comprehensive programme of teaching in personal, social and health education (PSHE) or Lifeskills as it is known at the school. Major topics include where to go for help, bullying, and eating sensibly, as well as alcohol, smoking, sex education and drug misuse. The programme is mainly classroom based but there are some outside speakers. There are appropriate links with the school nurses and the school's General Practitioners (GP). The staff and boarders are aware of the school's policy in responding to incidents regarding alcohol, smoking and illegal substances and consistent practice is followed. The school has two nurses who between them provide medical cover from 08:00 until 17:00 Monday to Friday and on Saturday morning. Both nurses are relatively new in post and are in the process of updating and developing medical practice within the school. There are links with the local GP practice and a range of healthcare professionals including dentists and opticians. The school nurses are looking to develop appropriate links with other independent school nurses in the area. There are two school GPs who are both male and who visit the school twice a week. Boarders can freely choose whether or not they are accompanied by staff when seeing the GP. A female GP within the practice can be requested if a boarder chooses. The nurses maintain a computer record of all visits to the medical centre which includes any medication administered. This information is filed under each pupil to maintain a running record. The nurses have provided training to houseparents in the safe administration of medication and there is a short list of non-prescribed medication stored in the boarding houses which has been approved by the GP. There are plans to provide medication training to house tutors and to visit the boarding houses on a termly basis to monitor the medication storage and records. The medical consent form signed by parents is being updated to include more areas and will be sent out in the near future. Some houseparents have up to date qualifications in first aid and there are plans to train the school nurses to deliver the training in this area. However, at present it is unclear whether there are always staff on duty in the boarding houses who have appropriate training in first aid. This is particularly important as there is no nursing cover from 17:00 on weekdays and during most of the weekend apart from Saturday morning. Throughout the inspection the quality and quantity of food on offer was of a good standard. Breakfast consists of a choice of hot foods

and two cereals, as well as toast, fruit and drinks. Lunch offers a wider choice, and is the main meal of the day. There is a choice of two hot dishes and a cold alternative from the salad bar. The evening meal is more limited, offering only a choice of one hot meal and a salad alternative. Special meals are prepared to celebrate different cultural festivals. Crockery and cutlery are clean, while the dining room and furnishings are suitable and of sufficient size for the numbers and ages of the boarders. There is a rotating queuing system for lunch which most students think is fair although opportunities for seconds are limited to those coming in later. "Comfort food" is offered on Saturdays. The menus are on a three week rotation. Mealtimes are sociable and orderly occasions. There is a mixed response from the students in their questionnaire about the standard of food. The majority offered some criticism. Themes that emerged are menus tend to be repetitive and the insufficient quantities of fruit and vegetables. The Food Committee is said to be a forum which students can use to make their views known about the quality, quantity and presentation of the food. However, this has only recently been re-instigated after an absence of 16 months. Some students spoken to were not aware of its existence whilst others are sceptical about its effectiveness. There is no representative from the medical team on the committee. Students have made requests through the School Council for the installation of water coolers/fountains. However, there is filtered water available in the dining room. Pupils are able to prepare snacks for themselves in all the boarding houses. The kitchen is a modern commercial kitchen that is very busy but also clean and well organised. The catering manager and his assistant are employed by outside contractors while all other kitchen staff are employed by the school. There are no significant outstanding recommendations of the Environmental Health Service.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is inadequate.

Boarders confirm that bullying is not generally an issue within the school and that staff act on any information that bullying might be taking place. One boarder explained that, 'I was bullied, but this was sorted out after I told a teacher (who) talked to us both and it did not happen again'. The school has developed and implemented a bullying policy and guidance which is directed to all staff and pupils. This provides a clear message that bullying is unacceptable and that it is everybody's responsibility to respond to any incidents and to protect boarders from bullying. The guidance includes definitions of bullying and also provides examples of how this may take place including 'cyber bullying', through the use of mobiles, emails and web sites. Boarders are encouraged to take concerns to staff or to use help lines and/or the school's complaints procedure. The school's Helping Hands Initiative provides the opportunity for students to help and support each other and includes a peer support programme. A number of the boarders identify peer supporters as being someone that they can share concerns with. One parent commented on the 'excellent support that his/her child had received following an incident of bullying from both the staff and the prefects (peer supporters). Bullying is an issue addressed through the life skills programme delivered to all of the pupils and boarders. The school has clear procedures for responding to child protection concerns and help to ensure that boarders are protected from abuse. All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and how to appropriately respond to any disclosures or allegations of abuse or serious concerns about a boarder's safety. The Headmaster and the Assistant Chaplain are the school's designated people and coordinate the response to child protection issues. Both have received appropriate training. Whole staff training on child protection is provided on a two yearly cycle. Arrangements are made for staff, including gap students, joining the school during the interim periods to be briefed on child protection procedures during their induction period. Training is also provided

to those pupils who are part of the peer support programme. The school has a number of versions of its child protection policy and guidance aimed at different groups within the school. The consistent message within these is that all of the students at the school should be protected from abuse. The Headmaster confirms that there are no current child protection issues within the school. Established systems are in place for consultation and referral to appropriate external agencies if required. The school's policy and guidance on behaviour, discipline, sanctions and rewards is very clear. Boarders are fully aware what standard of behaviour is expected from them and the consequence of breaking school rules or breaches in discipline. The management of behaviour is based on an active encouragement of acceptable behaviour. Details on the standard of behaviour that is expected from pupils, how this will be encouraged, the school rules and the use of sanctions are clearly set out in the school's code of behaviour. A copy of this is sent out to parents and boarders as part of the pre-admission documentation. The policy provides details of permissible and non-permissible sanctions and provides satisfactory guidance to staff. Punishments are not routinely carried over from the school day and sanctions used in the boarding time differ from those used in school. Boarders advise that they think that most individual boarding sanctions are fair but are not always proportionate or consistently applied. Some of the boarders spoken to state that they are encouraged by the staff to reflect on their behaviour and are normally given warnings if it is becoming a cause for concern or unacceptable. The frequency with which sanctions are given varies from house to house but they are not generally overused. Issues of concern, including behavioural matters and any consequences to these are recorded in the individual house incident logs. There is no evidence of the tracker sheets found in some of the logbooks being used, or the logbooks being monitored, to identify patterns, or trends and for these to be used to evaluate and inform practice. Boarders are unhappy with the use of group sanctions that are occasionally used by some houseparents and see these as being unfair. Some of the houseparents advise that they would welcome more advice and guidance on the issue of discipline within their houses. Serious punishments are recorded and monitored by the Headmaster. The disciplinary power of the prefect and gap students are clearly defined and adhered to. The school has a clear complaints procedure and information about this is available to boarders and parents. This is in response to a recommendation made following the last inspection that the school review and update its complaints procedure. This is now routinely provided to all parents as part of the pre-admission material provided to them. A copy of the complaints procedure is also posted on the school website. Boarders are provided with a booklet titled 'When things go wrong' and the Kingham Hill School Handbook which provides advice on how pupils and boarders can raise concerns, and who they can contact along with details of national helplines. Boarders indicate that there are a number of staff that they can approach with concerns and worries and are confident that these will be listened to. They are aware of the roles and services offered by the independent listener, independent visitor and counsellors and the contact arrangements for Childline. Records show that recent issues raised by parents or other sources have been dealt with effectively and at an informal level. There has not been a formal complaint made for a number of years. Details of informal complaints are kept by the Headmaster. The Boarding Mentor holds a surgery on a weekly basis for parents and boarders to contact him if they have any concerns or issues regarding boarding. Records are not kept of these contacts. These arrangements for handling concerns ensure that boarders have easy access to a number of adults or external agencies with whom they can discuss any issues that they may have about the care that they are receiving in the school. There is a good awareness among staff and boarders regarding the school's fire safety precautions. Systems are in place and followed for the regular checking and servicing of fire safety and detection equipment. Practise evacuations from each of the boarding houses

are routinely undertaken. Detailed records of all fire safety activity are regularly kept. However, some significant shortfalls in practice, and in the scope of existing fire risk assessments, means that the school fails to ensure that the boarders are always being protected from the risk of fire. Each boarding house has a fire risk assessment. These were all found to have failed to identify and address the shortfalls in fire safety. Fire doors are routinely wedged or propped open in the houses and in other areas of the school. Guidance about propping open doors is contradictory with tutors being implicitly advised that they can wedge open doors during prep periods. Fire doors were seen to be propped open at other times. Staff have failed to respond to requests that this should not take place. Furniture had to be removed to unblock access to two fire exits. Lighting over a number of external fire escapes and routes is inadequate, not working or not in place. The school took prompt action when informed of the shortfalls. The failure to adequately identify and to fully address the shortfalls in fire safety put the young people at risk. The role of Fire Marshal is delegated to one of the houseparents in each of the boarding houses. There is a lack of clarity and understanding regarding the extent and range of their responsibilities. Fire Marshall training specific to this role has not been provided. A number of tutors undertake boarding duties and cover periods during the week that the houseparents are off duty. Although they are advised about individual house fire procedures they do not receive any fire awareness training. Boarding staff show a regard for the privacy of the boarders and knock on dormitory doors before entering. The staff are aware of sensitive times such as showering, washing and changing and take steps to ensure that their supervision at these and other times is not intrusive. Practice is supported by good guidance. The Houseparent's Handbook provides guidance on meeting with the boarders. The gap students' induction handbook includes advice on maintaining appropriate boundaries with the boarders and guidance on entering female/male dormitories. Boarders do not report any concerns regarding their personal privacy. The school does not have a vigorous or safe staff recruitment procedure in place. There is no clear policy regarding what information is required. The recruitment files are not all in good order and a number consist of loose leaf sheets of paper with no checklist to ensure that all the required information has been obtained. It was found that one set of houseparents who have recently started their employment at the school have not had a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check undertaken and application forms had not been completed. This is a serious shortfall which places pupils at risk. Another two sets of houseparents who have also recently taken up employment started without CRB checks having been returned before they took up their positions. Their post requires considerable unsupervised access to pupils. The school does maintain a spreadsheet of CRB disclosures but the list seen contains only half the number of school employees. None of the files seen contain two written references or evidence that the references have been verified verbally. Other required information, such as interview records or application forms, is not on file. The school took appropriate action when informed that one set of houseparents did not have a CRB check but there are serious failings to properly vet all staff which put students at risk. The school has made arrangements that help to minimise the occasions that boarders have contact with adults who have not been subject to the school's vetting and checking procedures. Visitors to the school site are requested to go to reception where they are issued with a visitor's badge which is visible to all. Major building work is planned to take place during the holiday period when boarders are not resident. Outside contractors on site during term time are supervised by the maintenance staff who are easily identified. The school does not have any staff not employed by the school who live in the same building as boarding accommodation. Boarders spoken to explained that they have been told not to approach strangers and that they should report all strangers to a member of staff. Boarding accommodation and living areas are for the exclusive



use of boarders. Security to the houses has improved but inconsistency in practice and the easy access into the school grounds does not ensure that boarders are always secure from public intrusion. The school has a recording system for visitors to use and appropriate badges are provided but the school does not have a written policy for access to and security of accommodation and the site. Risk assessments for security in the boarding houses are brief. Houseparents and students state that the signing in and out system is not 'watertight' but manageable. Some students say that they feel safe in the boarding accommodation. However, others raise some concerns about strangers driving onto the site at night. There are panic alarms in dormitories in the girls' houses and the junior house. There are no external close circuit television cameras around the site but there is a camera in the library which is used to supervise pupils and boarders. There is coded access to each boarding house via a locked external door. Houseparents reported that some doors do not shut properly. Codes are not regularly changed. A number of these doors were found to be open on a number of occasions. Similar concerns had been identified during the previous inspection. The school has risk assessments for some aspects of safety of the premises and grounds and boarders' activities, but these fail to ensure that all areas used by boarders are free from avoidable safety hazards. There is a programme for arranging for electrical equipment belonging to the school and to the boarders to be regularly tested. However, a number of items were found not to have been recently tested. The condition of the furniture and carpeting is variable and in some areas constitutes a safety hazard. Boarders in a number of the houses make use of trailing extension leads to plug in their electrical appliances. Window restrictors are fitted in some windows over first floor level but some are no longer operational, while many windows on the ground floor do not have toughened glass. Generic risk assessments are in place. It is the responsibility of houseparents to complete these for each of the houses. Houseparents advise that they have received little or no instruction or training on how these should be completed. A number of the assessments have not been recently reviewed or updated. A number of parents and students express concerns that the lighting around the site is poor. Boarders of all ages have indicated that they do not always feel comfortable whilst moving around the site. This is an on going issue that had been identified during the last inspection. The school has embarked on a programme of improving the campus lighting but the anticipated date for completion of this project has now overrun by 18 months. The students know which areas and activities are out of bounds.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The arrangements made by the school to provide individual support to its pupils and boarders is one of its strongest features. The school has ensured that boarders are able to have easy access to range of support services. Boarders are clear which members of staff they can go to for personal support. All of the boarders spoken to identified at least one adult within the school that they could approach if they had any personal concerns. Boarders have open access to two part time counsellors, an independent listener, independent visitor and members of the chaplaincy team. The counsellors provide support and guidance to boarders who are experiencing emotional, behavioural and social issues. They work closely with the medical team and can request that boarders are referred to external agencies. The counsellors will work closely with a boarder and their family when this is required. The parents of one boarder spoke positively about the services provided by the school and explained that, 'personal needs are taken into account and supported', and other parents stated that their, 'daughter has been closely monitored and helped to achieve as far as possible given various emotional issues'. Boarders are able to self refer to the support services and make use of drop in sessions. Houseparents

and other staff can also make referrals. The counsellors work from a small room near the medical centre which is ideal for one to one work but is not practical for family or group work. There is no written protocol provided to the counsellors regarding thresholds relating to confidentiality. However, all of the staff spoken to are aware of their responsibilities regarding child protection issues. Contact details for the school's independent visitor and national help lines are displayed near the boarders' pay phones and in the school handbook. The support services are provided by staff of both genders allowing the boarders to make a preference if they wish. Boarders also identify the peer supporters as being able to offer individual support. The school has an approach that takes full account of the diverse needs of its boarders, pupils and staff. The school's equal opportunity policy is aimed at all students, parents and staff, and states that the school is 'opposed to all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination' and, 'aims to ensure equal treatment for all'. School documentation demonstrates a commitment to this aim and avoids using language or expressing sentiment that can be viewed as discriminatory in any form. The school's PSHE and Religious Education programmes address issues of moral, social, cultural and spiritual awareness. The school views itself as a community based on Christian principles and values and places a great emphasis on all pupils and boarders being fully integrated members of the school. Admission to the school is not based entirely on academic ability. A number of the boarders have specific learning difficulties, for example dyslexia, and these are met with services and support provided by the specific learning department (Green's). A number of boarders spoken to express the view that the Green's department is a fully integrated service within the school. The school makes good arrangements to assist those students whose first language is not English. Boarders are provided the opportunity to take part in cultural exchanges. The school has introduced a foundation sixth form course for overseas students plus an American studies programme. Arrangements are made to celebrate different cultural festivals and events.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The school has introduced a number of systems for listening to and obtaining the views of boarders. Boarders express their satisfaction with the consultation that has taken place in regards to the current refurbishment programme for the boarding houses. This has encouraged boarders to take ownership and pride in their environment. This is clearly demonstrated in the recently refurbished Greenwich boarding house where there are no signs of wilful damage or neglect and students are making a considerable effort to ensure that it is kept tidy and is well looked after. Boarders have regular evening meetings with their houseparents. These provide a regular opportunity to discuss events, activities and housekeeping matters. These meetings are not recorded. There are regular meetings between the Headmaster and prefects. However, the organisation of some of the other forums for consultation is inconsistent and some boarders express some scepticism about their purpose and effectiveness. A number of boarders identified that school council as a forum to express views and bring about change. However, only a few provided examples of any changes and improvements that the council has initiated. The bursar advised that finances are available to fund approved schemes or ideas put forward by the school council. The Food Committee has only recently been re-instated. The school has a positive attitude to boarders being able to maintain contact with their parents and family. Boarders have access to payphones in each of the boarding houses. All phones checked were found to be in working order. In most of the houses the location of payphones provides a good level of privacy. The school is aware of the need for this to be improved in some of the houses, and state that this will be addressed as part of the on going refurbishment programme. Contact details for the independent listener and national helplines are on display by or near the

payphones. Boarders are able to bring in their own mobile phones and these are made available to them at a specific time agreed with their houseparents. Boarders are able to retrieve e-mails from parents on computers based in the school. Boarders spoken to, including some from overseas, expressed their satisfaction with the current arrangements for maintaining contact with their families and friends.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

The school does not arrange lodgings for any of the boarders and this key standard was not inspected. Additional standards relating to the boarding accommodation and toilet and washing provision were inspected. The judgement for this outcome has been made based on findings relating to these standards. The boarding accommodation is provided in seven boarding houses that are spread out over the campus. The standards of accommodation varies considerably between the houses. The school is fully aware of the shortfalls in the boarding accommodation and has recently embarked on an ambitious programme that aims to completely refurbish each of the houses. Greenwich House has been completed and the standard achieved is outstanding and sets a benchmark standard for each of the other houses. New furniture has already been provided to some of the other houses. There is a lack of clarity amongst the boarding staff regarding how the refurbishment programme is being prioritised and how long it is likely to take. Boarding staff express some frustration about the lack of consultation they are having regarding the schemes. Boarding staff are concerned about how maintenance is prioritised and their ability to influence this, and gave examples of work that has been outstanding for some time. There are concerns that some of the more major issues, such as windows that are not secure and need replacing, will be put on hold until the house is refurbished. There are items of broken or damaged furniture in some of the houses. The overall standard of cleanliness and tidiness in some of the houses is not good and is an issue for some parents. One parent stated in a pre-inspection questionnaire that, 'a main concern is state of the boarding house. Filthy and untidy, not enough control. Cleaners only do the bathrooms; floors and desks are untouched'. Boarders are expected to take responsibility for the tidiness and cleanliness of their dormitories and cleaning staff take responsibility for communal areas. Boarders advise that heating is variable and that some of the larger dormitories are cold. Sleeping accommodation varies in size and number. The school has commenced a programme of replacing existing beds with a cabin style bunk bed. These provide each boarder with a hanging space, storage and a pullout desk. These have been put to good effect in Greenwich where they are an integral part of the whole refurbishment. They are not so successful in Plymouth where some have had to be put in front of features, such as blocked off fireplaces and the windows. Boarders state although generally satisfied with the beds, they do not provide the same level of privacy. The size of new cabin beds has led to a reduction of numbers in some dormitories and storage reserved for use by day pupils has been relocated. In Plymouth this has had an impact on the space available in the games room. Each boarding house has separate accommodation set aside for houseparents and other residential staff (gap students). The toilets and washing facilities within the boarding houses are variable. Previously identified issues regarding poor temperature control, water pressure and privacy remain in some houses. The excellent facilities in Greenwich and new the girls' showers in Plymouth provide a good level of privacy and provide a good benchmark for future development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Information on the school is contained in a range of different documents and also available from the school website. All of this information is made available to staff and parents. Each of the boarding houses has its own individual handbook which contains details of routines, responsibilities and house rules. These are provided to parents and boarders along with an overall guide and a booklet offering advice to parents whose child is boarding for the first time. Pre-admission documentation includes copies of key policies including the parents complaints procedure. The website provides a good overview of the school and the boarding provision and has a secure areas for parents. The information contained in the school's documentation and the information available to parents and staff reflects the current aims, organisation and boarding practice within the school. The existing arrangements for management of the boarding provision are not sufficiently integrated into the management of the school with weak lines of communication and accountability. The school has appointed a Boarding Mentor whose responsibilities include offering guidance and support to the boarding staff. The Boarding Mentor has been responsible for implementing regular monitoring visits to the boarding house and the appraisal of staff. The Boarding Mentor also oversees a standards committee which has been set up to audit and monitor the school's performance against the boarding school standards. However, the current arrangements for the management of the boarding provision do not allow for the full potential of these initiatives to be realised. The Boarding Mentor is not apart of the senior management team, does not control a budget and consequently, has limited opportunities to influence the practice and development of the boarding in the school. There are no arrangements for members of the governing body to visit the boarding houses or for one of its members to represent the interests of the boarding provision and staff. Specific responsibilities are said to have been delegated to senior members of staff for the regular monitoring of school records, but there is no evidence that all of these are being reviewed. The current arrangements are not robust and failed to identify shortfalls in the scope and manner in which environmental and fire risk assessments have been undertaken. The number of staff available for the supervision of boarders is generally sufficient for the number of boarders, the activities they are involved in and the different age and gender groups. Each of the seven boarding houses is managed by a married couple (houseparents). The houseparents are supported by a number of tutors with boarding responsibilities. Two gap students are allocated to Plymouth, the junior house for boys and girls. Numbers within the house range from between 16 and 36 boarders. These numbers can vary from day to day as day pupils stay on for the early part of the evening or request that they are allowed to stay overnight. Two gap students are allocated to the junior house. Houseparents are given Monday evening off and their duties and responsibilities are takeover by the boarding tutors. An on call system is in place to cover any emergencies requiring a houseparent to go off site. Boarders and day pupils have access to the boarding houses at certain points during the day. Staff spoken to are generally satisfied it the current staffing arrangements. However, they advise that there are lean times when they look for support from older students, or the gap students have to take on responsibilities normally undertaken by staff with boarding responsibilities. There is some lack of clarity regarding the supervision arrangement of the boarders and day pupils in the boarding houses during the day. The houseparents have job descriptions and the appointment is a joint one. New houseparents are positive about the informal induction and support provided by the outgoing houseparents, wherever possible, and by other houseparents and the Boarding Mentor. The formal induction given to new houseparents is the same as that provided for any new member of staff and does not specifically cover boarding duties. There is a programme of inset training for boarding staff which includes first aid and child protection. Some boarding staff have attended courses run by the Boarding Schools Association (BSA). Tutors with boarding responsibilities have not all

received first aid training. The current deployment of houseparents and tutors does not ensure that boarders are always able to have access to a qualified first aider at all times.

## 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):

- carry out an audit to ensure that there are a sufficient number of staff qualified in first aid. (NMS.15)
- ensure that boarders are routinely consulted about the catering provision within the school. (NMS.24)
- review the range of sanctions used in the boarding houses. (NMS.4)
- review and fully implement comprehensive fire risk assessments and procedures for each of the boarding houses. (NMS.26)
- complete an audit to ensure that all staff have a current CRB check. (NMS.38)
- review the recruitment and vetting procedure to ensure safe practice. (NMS.38)
- review the on site security arrangements. (NMS.41)
- ensure that all areas accessible by the boarders are free from safety hazards. (NMS.47)
- audit the standard of the boarding accommodation and identify and prioritise all maintenance issues. (NMS.40)
- review the arrangements for the management of the boarding provision. (NMS.8)
- ensure that all records are regularly monitored by a senior member of staff. (NMS.23)
- review the numbers and deployment of staff with boarding responsibilities. (NMS.31)
- implement an induction for houseparents specific to their boarding duties. (NMS.34)

## 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.**