

# De Aston School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Fiona Parker
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	7 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**

De Aston School provides education and boarding accommodation for 66 boarders with separate sleeping areas for boys and girls. Currently 1102 pupils receive education in the school. Accommodation is provided in a large Victorian house which is a listed building situated in pleasant and spacious grounds in close proximity to the school. Boarders can benefit from school facilities outside of school hours. The local market town of Market Rasen is a short walk where all local amenities are easily accessible. Good transport links are available to the city of Lincoln and the larger town of Grimsby. De Aston School is currently in the process of changing status to a foundation school.

### **Summary**

This inspection took place over two days with a lead inspector and a boarding school additional inspector. This was a statutory inspection required every three years to focus on the key standards and the progress on the recommendations from the previous inspection. In addition to the key standards, standards 5, 7,8, 11, 16, 17, 20, 24, 25, 40 and 49 were also inspected. Excellent progress has been made to meet the recommendations from the last inspection. Robust policies and procedures are in place and particular emphasis is placed on the individual welfare of boarders. Boarders are cared for by a positive and experienced staff team in all roles within the boarding house. Governors and senior management are committed to continual improvements in the boarding house and maintaining positive experiences for boarders overall.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Medical records have improved and contain current information and parental consents. Private payphones are in place for boarders' use. Boarders are consulted on a range of matters including food, menus and their views on boarding. All fire safety recommendations have been complied with. Induction, training and supervision is available for boarding staff and files evidence staff receive appraisals. Robust recruitment procedures are in place and followed, including all staff undertaking enhanced criminal record bureau checks. There is a system in place to review checks every three years. Arrangements are in place to accommodate boarders in identified rooms when ill. Improvements have been made to the privacy in the shower areas. A system is in place to record how any bullying incidences are managed. Improvements have also been made to the organisation of the staff team and the tutor support system, to ensure consistency particularly during preparatory times.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Boarders are provided with healthy, nutritious and varied meals including vegetarian options. Fruit, salads and yoghurts are available with every meal to ensure a balanced diet is available. Portions are good and access to snacks throughout the day satisfies the boarders. Boarders are consulted about the menus and feel they can make suggestions to catering staff at anytime. Snacks and fresh water are available and boarders have a kitchen area to prepare their own snacks and lockable cupboards for their own foods. Effective arrangements are in place for boarders to receive routine health care through locally identified health services. Appropriate

consents for all treatments are on file. Medical files are kept securely and contain details of boarders appointments, medical history, prescriptions and any absences from school. Arrangements are in place to look after boarders when they are ill and two rooms are used for this purpose. Records show boarders are checked upon each hour when ill. A system to alert staff during the night is in place, the arrangements for boarders to contact staff from the sick bay area during the night could be more clearly defined in guidance. The boarders spoken with feel they are well looked after and supported with any health needs. Staff are qualified to provide first aid and update this training as required. Information for boarders to seek support on health, personal or social issues are fully displayed and robust procedures are in place to manage risks to health such as smoking, alcohol and substance misuse. Records show incidences are rare but well managed. Robust welfare plans are in place to support individual boarders with a variety of needs, plans evidence strategies and monitoring systems are identified and regularly reviewed. External agencies also support boarders when appropriate and boarders felt they could discuss any issues with staff. Boarders benefit from an efficient laundry system which is available for them every day.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Bullying is not tolerated and any issues are robustly addressed in line with the policy. Boarders do not report bullying as a concern for them and felt they would be protected. Staff closely monitor any potential issues and clearly demonstrate an awareness of individual needs. Records show firm action is taken if bullying is identified. Boarders' safety and welfare is supported by robust policies and procedures for responding to safeguarding issues, including boarders who may be missing. All staff are aware of the actions for them to take to report any issues. Records show any potential safeguarding matters are thoroughly managed, recorded and the appropriate parties consulted. A designated child protection officer coordinates all safeguarding issues and attends regular briefings to maintain their knowledge. Boarders clearly state they feel safe in the boarding house and their privacy is respected at all times. Robust policies are in place to respond to inappropriate behaviour, records show any punishment is fair and proportionate, parents are routinely kept informed and provided with information. Boarders clearly understand the rules and their responsibilities, they felt fairly treated and punishments are not frequently used. Boarders are aware of the complaint process and feel they can express any concerns. Records show complaints are not frequently made and this supports boarders' view that issues are sorted quickly before they become formal. Safe arrangements are in place to ensure boarders know how to respond to fire emergencies. Fire drills take place regularly and the advice of the fire service fully complied with. Risk assessments in place are regularly updated and equipment and safety checks routinely undertaken. Safe arrangements are in place to manage visitors, and staff clearly understand their responsibilities, however records do not always record all visitors to the boarding house consistently. External entrances are monitored by cameras which limits the possibility of any unauthorised access to the boarding house. Measures are not in place to fully monitor access during the day when boarders are not present. This is considered to be low risk to boarders overall safety. Staff are vigilant during the evenings to ensure no unauthorised people are on site. All areas inside and outside of the boarding house are subject to risk assessments to protect boarders at all times. All activities are subject to risk assessment and parental consent. A robust health and safety policy provides guidance for all staff. Robust recruitment practices are in place and files seen support all appropriate checks are in place, including enhanced criminal record bureau checks. Good practice guidance is followed to ensure

enhanced criminal record checks are renewed every three years and this demonstrates full commitment to promoting safe care for boarders.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Regular activities are offered for boarders, this includes activities in the house and weekly trips such as the cinema, shopping, bowling and skating. School facilities such as the sports hall and gym are available after school hours with the appropriate supervision. Boarders are happy with the free time they have and they can easily access the local town when agreed. Internet access is available and appropriate safeguards are in place. Individual support for boarders is excellent, boarders feel they have several people they can talk to should they need to and discussions show this can be a number of staff in different roles. Information on a variety of support services including an independent visitor are prominently displayed. The independent visitor will visit the boarding house regularly to promote opportunities for boarders to discuss issues when they need to. Tutor systems are in place in school and provide opportunities for all boarders to discuss issues. Positive arrangements with external partners ensure a range of support systems are available for boarders who need this. Boarding staff were very positive in their roles and at all times demonstrated their commitment to boarders welfare. Excellent practice is in place to enable boarders to maintain friendships with non-boarders, subject to written request and permission friends can stay overnight. Friends can also visit in the day with permission. The boarding house accommodates boarders from different ethnic backgrounds, staff at all levels regularly discuss the challenges of caring for a diverse group and are fully committed to providing positive experiences for all. Race equality policy is in place and there are systems to explore and monitor any issues to ensure discrimination is not a factor. Records show any potential issues are quickly and robustly managed. Boarders report they feel fairly treated at all times. An excellent system of support is in place to assist boarders with the English language and it is particularly recognised that this support is dictated by the students needs. Boarders speak highly of this support and express pride in reaching their individual goals.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders feel they are listened to and consulted regularly by staff on all levels including the head teacher. Records evidence consultation happens on an informal basis and there is a full commitment to improving consultation processes and developing these formally. Boarders have regular and private access to telephones and email to maintain contact with parents and families. Staff maintain contact with parents, and records support parents are informed of relevant matters affecting their child. Boarders and staff enjoy positive and respectful relationships. Boarders feel they are fairly and consistently treated by all staff.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The accommodation for boarders is well lit, warm and homely and reasonably decorated in most areas. There is an impressive commitment to improve on the privacy and space for boarders and overcome the limitations inherent with listed buildings. One large dormitory has been altered to provide spacious double rooms for male boarders and a conversion upstairs has provided a homely space for female boarders. Partitions are used in dormitories to create privacy and individual space for boarders. Boarders can personalise their space to their own tastes and

keep their possessions safe in lockable cupboards. Bathroom facilities are satisfactory and private.

## Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Excellent information is available for parents and boarders on all aspects of boarding. This clearly sets out what is provided and what can be expected. The information in the documents is consistent with the experience of boarding found during this visit. Staff are supported in their role with robust policies and procedures which specifically set out the expectations, guidelines and information for boarding staff. All staff receive an induction to boarding and regular training. It is of particular note the opportunity for house parents to achieve professional qualifications in boarding, this demonstrates the commitment of the school to ensuring high standards for boarders and professional support for boarding staff. House parents also have the opportunity to undertake statutory child protection training and one house parent has attended this. All members of staff have received appropriate child protection training and refresher training is undertaken every three years. Boarders receive care from a consistent staff team and sufficient numbers of staff are in place to provide safe supervision levels. Changes have been made to provide consistent support during homework sessions. Records and risk assessments are regularly monitored by the head of boarding. Excellent communication takes place between the head teacher and the head of boarding to ensure boarders' welfare. Frequent visits are undertaken to the boarding house by the head teacher, however evidence is not in place to support how records are monitored to fully meet the standard. Specific responsibilities for boarding are designated within the governing body and regular meetings take place to discuss all matters and developments in relation to boarding. Governors visit the boarding house but written records are not in place to support how welfare and boarding matters are monitored during visits. Clearly the commitment to positive experiences and improvements for boarders is part of the overall future development and financial planning within the school.

## 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):

- consider ways to improve security at the entrance (nms 41.5)
- record Governor visits and monitoring of the boarding house (nms 8.2)
- record the Head or senior member of staff's monitoring of records as required at least twice a term (nms 23.2)
- clarify the arrangements in policy that happen in practice for boarders to contact staff when in sick bay overnight (nms 16.3).

## 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.**