

Queen Anne's School

Inspection report for boarding school

Unique reference number	SC011036
Inspection date	23 January 2008
Inspector	Lucy Martin
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	15 June 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

Queen Anne's School is a school for girls aged 11 – 18 years of age offering day places as well as weekly and termly boarding. There are currently 316 pupils, of whom 200 are boarders. There are four boarding houses, three of which are near the main school buildings and the upper sixth house which is a short distance away. The school has extensive grounds that provide sporting and recreational facilities.

Summary

This inspection took place over three days. The team consisted of two Ofsted inspectors and a Boarding School Additional Inspector (BSAI). Boarders receive good pastoral care and enjoy boarding at the school. They feel safe and have access to a range of adults who can support them in enjoying and achieving whilst at this school. There are low levels of bullying and the standard of the boarding accommodation is good.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school was last inspected by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in June 2004. The focus of that inspection was to follow up the recommendations made at the last inspection which was carried out in November 2002. All the recommendations had been met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The school has a comprehensive programme teaching all pupils about personal, social and health education. All pupils have a lesson taught by their tutors every week, and the sixth form have an additional hour a week after school. The issues covered are wide ranging and there are a number of external speakers. The boarders rate the programme highly. The policies concerning drug and alcohol misuse are well known to staff and boarders. The sanctions are clear and are used when necessary. However, these occasions are rare. The school has one nurse who is resident and boarders feel that there is always someone to help them if they are unwell. A small number of boarders feel that they would like to be able to see the school nurse at lunchtime when she is not in the medical centre, but she can be contacted in an emergency. A GP from a local surgery acts as the school doctor and holds surgeries at the school twice a week. It is usual that the boarders see the doctor on their own unless they request otherwise. There are arrangements with a local dentist surgery for boarders if they require emergency treatment. There is good communication between the nurse, the boarding houses and the academic staff regarding medical issues. Good records are maintained of when boarders visit the nurse and medical consent forms are obtained. The school has a programme of training in first aid for both teaching and non-teaching staff as well as training in other medical procedures such as the use of medication for those girls with severe allergies. A small stock of non-prescribed medication is securely stored in the medical centre and distributed to the boarding houses. The housemistresses and assistant housemistresses administer medication and record the details. In one house the dose of the medication was not recorded and in another the details of medication to be administered 'when required' were not clear. Some boarders are keeping their own medication bought in from home despite the rule that all medication is handed in. Boarders

in the sixth form are allowed to keep and administer their own medication but the guidelines and safeguards surrounding this are not clear. Sick boarders are accommodated in their own rooms as the sick bay only contains one bed and tends to be used by day pupils. There is no policy or risk assessment to indicate the action the school would take if there was an outbreak of a highly infectious disease. There are good records maintained of the hourly checks made on the girls but the boarding houses are large and urgent assistance may be required between the hourly checks. Although boarders with mobile phones can use them if they are close at hand in an emergency situation, there are no formal procedures in place to indicate how sick boarders in the house can contact staff in the daytime without getting up and looking for someone. The food at the school is varied and of good quality. The boarders have a wide range of choice including vegetarian options and there is a full salad bar at lunch and at the evening meal. The sixth form are able to eat lunch in their own café and the upper sixth eat their evening meal in their boarding house. There are good facilities for older boarders to start cooking their own meals and tuition is provided. Fresh fruit is provided at every lunch and supper and at two breakfasts a week. Boarders overall, are appreciative of the choice and quality of the food provided. The kitchen staff receive training in health and safety and food hygiene and the school monitors attendance at every meal.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The school has an effective policy on countering bullying which is known to parents, boarders and staff and which is implemented successfully in practice. The boarders do not identify bullying as a problem at the school and the survey carried out by all boarders before the inspection identified exceptionally low levels of bullying. The school has a child protection policy which it is in the process of reviewing and updating. The deputy head (pastoral) is the designated person for child protection and has attended suitable training within the last two years. There is a programme of training from external trainers to ensure that all teaching and non-teaching staff receive training in child protection at least every three years. Records of attendance are maintained and briefings are given to staff who start work between the three yearly training. The school responds appropriately to child protection concerns and liaises with local authorities if necessary. The school has a clear written policy on school rules and punishments which is available to all staff and parents and known by the pupils. The boarders say that good behaviour is rewarded and made known at house meetings. Behaviour at the school is generally good, with few major punishments recorded. Each boarding house maintains a sanctions book which records the punishments given but there are few entries. The daybooks suggest that house staff are finding some girls' behaviour difficult to manage in the evenings but they are not following the school's clear policy in terms of giving out sanctions. This has meant that there is some inconsistency between policy and practice. There is information given to parents and boarders about how to complain but they are not informed that they can contact Ofsted regarding any complaint concerning a boarder's welfare. Few complaints are made but comprehensive records are maintained about concerns or complaints received by the school and the action taken as a result. The school has a clear recruitment procedure but key information is sometimes difficult to find in the files. Most of the required checks such as Criminal Records Bureau Checks (CRB) and two written references are routinely carried out but some information is not consistently evidenced such as verbal verification of references and a written record of the interview. Not all of the 'gap' students have two written references on file and one had none. Members of the public use the sporting facilities in the sports centre including the gym. There are occasions when members of public are using the gym at the same

time as the pupils who are unsupervised. This presents a risk to pupils. There are good procedures in place for ensuring the safety of boarders in the boarding houses. The boarders report that they feel safe and regular fire drills take place in boarding time. All recommendations of the Fire Service have been complied with and there is regular servicing of the fire safety systems and fire extinguishers. Gas safety checks and testing of portable electrical appliances routinely takes place. Visitors to the school site wear badges and taxi and coach companies used by the school have been asked to confirm that CRB checks are carried out on their drivers. The boarding houses have keypad locks on each door and a burglar alarm system for use at night. A security company is employed to patrol the grounds at night. The school has recently updated its health and safety policy and house safety checks identifying hazards have been completed by each housemistress. There are comprehensive risk assessments carried out when pupils go offsite on activities or outings.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is a wide range and choice of activities available for boarders outside teaching time. The boarders enjoy them and see this as a strength of the school. There are sporting activities as well as other cultural and creative activities available. One of the housemistresses has responsibility for organising the programme and regularly consults with the girls for their input and to ensure that they are happy with the programme. The weekend activities are such that some weekly boarders choose to stay at school to participate. The school has recently installed wireless access to the internet in all the boarding houses which is appreciated by the boarders. There are appropriate safeguards in place regarding internet usage which is monitored. The boarders feel well supported and there are a number of staff to whom they feel able to talk if they have a problem. The school has an Independent Listener who sees pupils referred to her by the deputy head or the school nurse. The boarders spoken to did not all know of the existence of the Independent Listener and are unable to contact this person directly. This system does not ensure easy access to outside support. There is no evidence of discrimination towards any minority groups within the school. Boarders confirm that everyone is encouraged to fit in and that their various talents and abilities are properly recognised. There are a number of boarders from overseas and they are positive about the help and support they receive in enabling them to integrate into school life. Special religious and cultural events are celebrated and extra English lessons are given if needed. The school has some pupils with special medical needs and they are provided with additional support.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are formal opportunities for boarders to contribute their views. The School Council and Food Committee meet regularly and each boarding house has a meeting on a weekly basis. The school makes changes as a result of listening to boarders including changing the rules for mobile phone access to allow boarders to have their phones after the end of the teaching day until bedtime. The sixth form do not have to hand in their phones at night. Another popular change has been the introduction of wireless IT facilities into the boarding houses. Boarders can contact parents by mobile phone, house office phone, payphone or by e-mail. Boarders are appreciative of the changes made to the mobile phone policy which enables them to have their mobile phones for a longer period. The staff contact parents on a regular basis.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There are four boarding houses and all the boarding accommodation seen is of a good standard. There have been changes made to the boarding houses and three of the boarding houses were moved to facilitate better co-ordination between the junior houses and to provide a more independent lifestyle for the upper sixth. The two junior houses are now near the main school site and there is positive feedback from staff and boarders that the changes are working well. All the boarding houses are clean, comfortable, well maintained and decorated. The bedrooms are all of a reasonable size with older girls having single rooms. There are good recreational areas within the houses and there are adequate toilet and washing facilities. The school is looking to improve further the standard of boarding accommodation offered, both to the boarders and the house staff. It recognises that changes are needed to one house to ensure that none of the house staff share boarders' toilet and washing facilities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school's main prospectus and one specific to the sixth form accurately reflect the current boarding practice at the school. Additional information is provided to parents in a booklet and there is information available on the school's website. There is clear leadership from the headmistress supported by the senior management team. The current headmistress joined the school in September 2006 and maintains good oversight of the day to day running of the boarding houses through weekly meetings with the housemistresses. The deputy head (pastoral) takes the lead role in pupil welfare and is the designated person for child protection. The senior management team ensures that key records such as risk assessments, major punishments, complaints and accidents are monitored on a regular basis. The deputy head (pastoral) monitors the day books and the school nurse monitors the medication records kept in the boarding houses. There are good staffing levels in the boarding houses at all times including the evenings and weekends. Each boarding house has a resident housemistress together with a team of one or two assistant housemistresses, gap students and housekeepers in the sixth form houses. The boarders say that they can always find a member of house staff when they need one. There are clear systems in place for knowing where boarders are at all times. All the boarding staff have job descriptions including the gap students. The housemistresses feel well supported informally and there are weekly meetings with the headmistress and deputy head (pastoral) and the school nurse. There are some formal systems in place for the induction, supervision and appraisal of boarding staff, but they are not consistently adhered to and not all staff have experienced them. The school provides regular training for boarding staff in key areas such as first aid and child protection. External training is offered and some housemistresses have undertaken training provided by the Boarding Schools Association.

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):

- review the medication policy and practice (NMS 15)
- review the provision for sick boarders (NMS 16)
- ensure that boarders can always summon help when sick (NMS 16)
- review the sanctions policy and practice in the boarding houses (NMS 4)
- ensure that boarders and their parents are provided with information about how to contact Ofsted regarding any complaint concerning boarders welfare (NMS 5)
- ensure that consistent recruitment practices are carried out and that the file provides clear evidence that all the required checks have been completed (NMS 38)
- review the use of the gym to ensure that members of the public do not use these facilities at the same time as unsupervised pupils (NMS 39)
- review the outside support available to boarders to ensure that they are aware of this person and know how to contact them directly (NMS 14)
- review the systems in place for the induction, supervision and appraisal of boarding staff (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.