

The Mount School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Date of last inspection	21 February 2005

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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

The Mount is an independent school situated in York. It is positioned close to the centre of the city of York enabling easy access to shops, leisure facilities and public transport. It is a short walk to the railway station. The boarding facilities are available to female boarders only ranging from 11-19 years of age. The pupils are accommodated in two boarding houses: one for younger pupils, which is located on the first and second floor of the main school building and one for older pupils which is located across a small road adjacent to the school. The school operates term time only, with boarding pupils expected to return to a home base during holidays.

Summary

This was an announced inspection assessing the school's performance in providing positive outcomes for boarders. The inspection included checking the school's progress in meeting the recommendations made at the last inspection. The inspection covered all the key and some additional National Minimum Standards. The food in the school is outstanding and provides pupils with a variety of healthy options to meet their needs. Child protection is effectively managed with good links with outside agencies. The school welcomes and celebrates the diversity of boarders and pupils from overseas are integrated well into the school. The whole school is well managed and there is a supportive governing body. There is a good security system to protect boarders. The school has very good extra curricular structure for activities and opportunities to develop skills in a variety of areas for pupils. The girls behaviour is very good which comes from ethos of respect and pupils represent the school well. As a result of this inspection the following recommendation were made to the Head Teacher; provide an induction and supervision or appraisal for boarding staff so staff are given support in their roles. Record all significant events such as any pupils who go missing to ensure systems are clearly followed. The staffing levels at weekends reduce the number of activities pupils can participate in. The pupils do not know who is on duty at night so if they are ill they are unsure who to go to, this may put pupils at risk. A record of fire drills is not held in each boarding house this would ensure staff hold fire drills regularly and promote fire safety. The recruitment process is not robust to safeguard pupils. The boarding staff's roles need to be clarified and establish protocols for communication across departments to promote consistency across the school and with the pupils. There is no mechanism for feedback on any issues raised at pupil boarding meeting, this would acknowledge that pupils are listened to and keep them informed. The boarding policies need to be implemented in practice to ensure staff have an understanding of them so pupils are safeguarded. The carpets and curtains and showers in school house are in need of replacement so the accommodation is adequately furnished and maintained.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the following recommendations were made: the ancillary staff have had child protection training and are aware of the procedures. There is a policy on whistleblowing which is available to all staff. There is a plan available that identifies planned responses for foreseeable major incidents this helps safeguard the pupils. The fire records indicate the senior person to call the fire brigade. Fire induction for staff is completed to ensure all staff are aware of the procedure. The pupils have been provided with lockable storage for valuables and pupils

confirmed these are used. Window restrictors on windows above the ground floor are now in place to protect pupils from harm. The policy on the recruitment of staff has been updated and the taxi drivers used by the school have a Criminal Records Bureau check undertaken to safeguard the pupils.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are policies and procedures in place for alcohol, smoking and illegal substances and staff follow the policy in practice. Boarding pupils personal, social and health education is promoted through the school curriculum. The school nurse provides advice and guidance on health issues to pupils, which is good practice. Boarders receive good quality medical treatment and first aid. There are registered nurses available in the medical centre for the treatment of minor illnesses and there are first aiders among the boarding staff. There is a sound recording system in place that is kept by the school nurses and health records contain information from parents which is received when the pupil starts at the school. There are medical forms which give consent for emergency treatment and administration of non-prescription medication. The parents are kept fully informed if a pupils is ill. However, in the boarding house there were some medications stored that were out of date and there is no stock control in place for non-prescription medication. There is no formalised communication system between the medical staff and the boarding staff with regard to when medication has been administered. This does not provide a safe system and puts pupils at risk. The medical centre has good facilities to look after sick pupils. The medical staff are on duty overnight if required. All boarding pupils have access to a local community doctor who is also the designated school doctor. Pupils confirm that they can access the doctor in confidence. The boarders receive very good quality catering. The menu planning is good and includes culturally appropriate foods and takes into account special dietary needs. There is a very good choice and pupils are listened to through the food council which is organised by the sixth form pupils. Meals are taken in the main dining room, which is bright and well decorated and comfortably furnished. The laundry provision is generally good. Some pupils reported things have been lost. There is a separate laundry in College House for boarding pupils who wish to do their own laundry. They confirmed that this was a good provision.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The boarders confirm that bullying is not an issue and will not be tolerated. Staff are aware of cyber bullying and clearly deal with any issues that arise. The school have had talks to pupils and parents on using the internet safely, which is good practice. There is a bullying policy available and the pupils say they do not think that there is any bullying within the school, if there is it is dealt with by the staff. The response to child protection issues is good and boarders are protected from harm. The school have clear procedures for responding to child protection, which includes guidance for staff about actions that should be taken if a boarder goes missing. The schools child protection coordinator has good links with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. The majority of staff have received training or a briefing in child protection as have some of the older pupils. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of how to respond to child protection concerns. The staff have recorded some of the significant events that have occurred but not all, such as when a pupil goes missing from school. The girls behaviour is very good which comes from an ethos of respect. Pupils represent the school well. There is a clear code of conduct policy that identifies the sanctions that can be given. The pupils see punishments

as fair and records of significant sanctions are recorded by the Head Teacher. In College House any sanctions are recorded in the daily log. However, there are few sanctions given to the pupils. The school have a complaints procedure and this is available to boarders and parents. Complaints records are kept of all complaints and how they are responded to, these are centrally held by the Head Teacher. The records are clear and show that complaints are responded to promptly and demonstrates the appeals process. The supervision of boarders does not intrude unnecessarily on their privacy. The pupils said their privacy is respected. Staff were observed to respect privacy. Fire drills are carried out and on the tour of the building pupils confirmed they know where to evacuate to. However, there is no record made in the boarding houses when these are carried out and so there is no clear record if any issues have arisen and action taken. There are risk assessments in place to address safety aspects of the school premises, grounds and boarders activities. All boarders know which areas are out of bounds. This helps to ensure that areas used by boarders are free from avoidable safety hazards. The recruitment records indicate that most checks are undertaken before staff are appointed. However, Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are not in place prior to the staff member starting work. This does not protect boarders from risk of contact with unsafe adults.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders receive excellent pastoral support from the school staff and confirm they can go for personal guidance or with a personal problem. In addition the school has a personal tutor system where pupils can discuss welfare issues as well academic matters. The school has a school counsellor that pupils can access thorough the health centre and this is confidential. The school has boarders from various cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs. These factors are taken into account in the care of boarders and the care is sensitive to their differing needs. There is excellent practice for pupils to follow their own religious beliefs and attend places of worship if they wish. The school makes very good arrangements to assist those pupils whose first language is not English. The boarding pupils have access to a wide range of activities both after school and at the weekends. Pupils are encouraged to take part in a number of activities throughout the week such as sport, music and hobbies some of which are new to them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

There are some opportunities for boarders to contribute to the operation of the boarding house. There are formal school council meetings and boarding house meetings. There are no minutes kept of these meetings so there is no record of issues discussed. The boarders said they do not get to know the outcome of some issues they have raised, so do not feel that their views are listened to or valued. Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families. The boarders are able to have their own dedicated email accounts through which they can maintain contact with parents. The post is delivered to the school and each pupil is able to collect this from their boarding house. There are telephones available in College House these are easily accessible and offer privacy. However, in School House one telephone did not work and pupils said it had not worked for sometime. There are contact numbers for help lines posted adjacent to pupil telephones. Staff contact parents if there are any significant welfare issues relating to their child.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The accommodation provided for boarders is comfortable and adequately heated and lit. The boarding facilities are divided into two, School House for the younger pupils and College House for sixth form pupils. Both houses are adequately furnished and there has been some refurbishment of bedrooms and bathrooms. However, some of the carpets are not well fitted and some of the curtains are flimsy and do not fit the windows. The bathrooms and toilet facilities are generally good and provide privacy for the pupils. However, The showers in School House have doors that do not fit correctly and there is lime scale on the shower trays. The sleeping accommodation, beds and bedding are of a good standard and are generally clean and tidy. In both boarding houses the pupils can personalise their room with posters and personalise items. The school has provided boarders with lockable storage so all valuables can be securely stored. Boarders said that staff will also store valuables for them.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

There is available a suitable statement of boarding principles and practice. This information is produced in a number of publications and is available to staff, parents and boarders. The Head Teacher monitors records twice each term but presently does not sign to indicate these have been completed. There is reasonable action taken to reduce risks and risk assessments are in place. There is sufficient numbers of staff to supervise boarders outside of lessons appropriate to the age and numbers and needs of boarders. However, the rota in College House indicates that there are times at the end of the week when staffing is lighter so there is a reduction in the choice of activities available for boarders. Boarders said that if they are taken ill in the night they are unsure who is on duty. This may put children at risk. The school provides staff with job descriptions of their duties. Not all staff have had an induction and there is no regular reviews of staff's boarding practice through individual supervision meeting or a staff annual appraisal. This would enable staff to have a clear understanding of their roles and ensure the pupils have staff who are consistent in their practice. There is a written handbook which includes policies and procedures on boarding practice. This has been recently updated. Boarding pupils said that sometimes boarding staff are not consistent in their approach in managing the boarding provision. Staff need too be fully aware of all policies to ensure there is consistency across staff and boarding houses. There are boarding house staff meetings but these are infrequent and there is no formal system established for communicating with academic staff. This does not provide consistency and effective communication throughout the whole school which supports and safeguards boarding pupils.

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 medications stock control and disposal of medications in boarding houses is reviewed and establish a formal system of recording medications between boarding and medical staff (NMS 15.12)
- ensure staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities (NMS 34)
- ensure there is an appropriate process for the regular review of performance of each member of staff with boarding duties (NMS 34.5)
- ensure there is an induction in place for all boarding staff to include policies, ethos of the school and recording (NMS 34.4)
- ensure that a record of fire drills is held in the boarding houses (NMS 26.3)
- ensure a system of recording of all significant events, such as when a pupil goes missing from school (NMS 3)
- ensure that the telephone in school house is repaired and this provides privacy (NMS 19.3)
- ensure there is a robust system of recruitment of staff who will work with boarders and includes Criminal Records Bureau clearance before appointment is confirmed (NMS 38.2)
- establish a feedback mechanism when pupils views have been raised (NMS 12)
- ensure that the boarding houses are suitably maintained and furnished, such as carpets and curtains (NMS 40.10)
- ensure the showers in school house have correctly fitted doors and attention is given to the limescale (NMS 44)
- ensure levels of staff need to be reviewed at the end of the week and at weekends to ensure pupils have choice in activities (NMS 31.2)
- ensure the pupils are aware of who is on duty at night (NMS 31)
- ensure policies are implemented in practice to ensure consistencies across staff and boarding houses (NMS 35)
- establish protocols for communication between departments that is consistent and follows the school guidance to include pupil communication (NMS 35.2).

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for boarding school

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders' health is promoted (NMS 6)
- safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records (NMS 7)
- boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary (NMS 15)
- boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill (NMS 16)
- boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal problems (NMS 17)
- boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals (NMS 25)
- boarders are suitably accommodated when ill (NMS 48)
- boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered (NMS 49).

Ofsted considers 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders are protected from bullying (NMS 2)
- boarders are protected from abuse (NMS 3)
- use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate (NMS 4)
- boarders' complaints are responded to appropriately (NMS 5)
- the operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school (NMS 22)
- boarders are protected from the risk of fire (NMS 26)
- the welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school (NMS 28)
- boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities (NMS 29)
- boarders' personal privacy is respected (NMS 37)
- there is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders (NMS 38)
- boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures; all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises are supervised (NMS 39)
- boarders have their own accommodation, which is secure from public intrusion (NMS 41)
- boarders are protected from safety hazards (NMS 47)

Ofsted considers 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders have access to a range and choice of activities (NMS 11)
- boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination (NMS 18)
- boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands (NMS 27)
- boarders have satisfactory provision to study (NMS 43)
- boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas (NMS 46)

Ofsted considers 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.

Annex A

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school (NMS 12)
- boarders receive personal support from staff (NMS 14)
- boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families (NMS 19)
- new boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in (NMS 21)
- boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school (NMS 30)
- there are sound relationships between staff and boarders (NMS 36)

Ofsted considers 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders' possessions and money are protected (NMS 20)
- boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation (NMS 40)
- boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation (NMS 42)
- boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities (NMS 44)
- boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day (NMS 45)
- boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school (NMS 50)

Ofsted considers 51 the key standard to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- a suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- there is clear leadership of boarding in the school (NMS 8)
- crises affecting boarders' welfare are managed effectively (NMS 9)
- the school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare (NMS 10)
- risk assessment and school record-keeping contribute to boarders' welfare (NMS 23)
- boarders are supervised adequately by staff (NMS 31)
- staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site (NMS 32)
- boarders are adequately supervised at night (NMS 33)
- boarders are looked after by staff which have specific boarding duties, and have received adequate induction and continued training (NMS 34)
- boarders are looked after by staff which follow clear boarding policies and practice (NMS 35)
- the welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 51)
- the welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

Ofsted considers 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.