

Leys School

Inspection report for boarding school

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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

Leys School is an independent, co-educational school, established in 1875. It is situated in the centre of Cambridge, set back from the main road, within extensive grounds. The school offers boarding accommodation to pupils between the ages of 11 and 18 years. Home boarders, remaining on the premises for organised prep after formal lessons, are accepted as are day pupils. There are approximately 540 pupils in total from within and outside the United Kingdom. There are eight boarding houses in total and all with one exception are located within the school's grounds. The remaining boarding house, providing accommodation for junior pupils, is situated across the road from the school. Each house has a resident housemaster or housemistress, a day matron and resident assistant. Boarders' sleeping arrangements range from single rooms to small dormitories. There is communal space in each boarding house and boarders are encouraged to participate in activities across the school community. The school's extensive grounds provide a wide range of sporting and recreational opportunities. Facilities at the school have been developed and extended during recent years to meet changing needs.

Summary

This was an announced key inspection and all key standards were inspected. Boarders are provided with a good level of care and outstanding pastoral support. Their views are sought and are listened to. Positive behaviour is promoted as are tolerance and respect for one another. Health needs are managed and responded to well. Appropriate guidance and training are made available to staff to support them in safeguarding the welfare of boarders. The school's boarding provision is well managed and systems are in place to support and review the performance of staff. A programme of refurbishment is underway in relation to the boarding provision in consultation with boarders. Safety and security matters are taken seriously by the school. Pupils are informed of matters affecting them and the advice of professional consultants is sought to support the school in providing a safe environment for pupils and staff. A recommendation has been made in relation to keeping pupils and parents informed of the actions taken to provide a safe environment for children. The recommended actions and advisory recommendations raised at the last inspection have been addressed.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection asked the school to redress the imbalances in the application of punishments across boarding houses and inform boarders of the outcome of any complaints raised by them. housemasters and housemistresses now work collectively to ensure that there is consistency, as far as possible, in the disciplining of pupils. Where received, the outcome of complaints are communicated appropriately. The school was also asked to record the outcome of staff interviews and the verification of identity on personnel files. This practice has been adopted. The actions taken in response to these recommendations support the safeguarding of children's welfare. The length of adequate 'town time' allocated to sixth form boarders was asked to be reviewed in light of the strength of feeling amongst pupils. This matter has been addressed in consultation with pupils and demonstrates the securing of boarders' views.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The emotional and health care of boarders is promoted and they receive health care as necessary. The school's medical centre offers 24 hour cover from a well-staffed and qualified team. Personal, social and health education primarily takes place within the teaching environment of the school. Additional support is available from medical centre staff if required. Good working relationships are reported to exist between the medical centre and the school doctors' surgery. Regular visits are made by the school doctors who liaise with other health professionals as necessary. The school holds a medical history of each pupil. Parental consent to medical treatment and first aid is obtained at the point of admission. Boarders have access to medical, optical and dental services as required. Medical centre staff undertake regular training to update their knowledge and to support their role. Recent topics include first aid, sports injury and epipen training. The centre's staff are involved in the co-ordination of training events for health staff from other schools in the region. The school is committed to providing first aid training to all groups of staff. A new programme of training is in place. Records are maintained of all accidents, treatments and significant illnesses. Systems are in place for the safe storage and administering of medication, including those held by pupils. Emphasis is placed on the provision of a balanced, healthy diet. Some boarders think that some menus could be improved whilst the majority refer positively to the range of food on offer.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The school's countering bullying policy is provided to staff, pupils and parents. Matters related to bullying are discussed during assemblies, personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and tutorials. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they should do if someone is making them unhappy. Bullying is not tolerated and is not identified as a problem at the school. Boarders identify a wide range of adults within the school whom they would go to with any problems. House staff, tutors and matrons are viewed as particular sources of support for dealing with such matters. Prefects and Heads of House have received guidance on how to refer matters to staff in the event of any incidents coming to their attention. All staff receive a child protection briefing upon joining the school and at regular intervals thereafter. Guidance and procedures are in place for all staff, including ancillary staff, to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. The school's child protection policy is under review to take account of staff changes in role and the inclusion of a 'whistleblowing' statement. All staff have access to the school's 'whistleblowing' policy. Staff are aware of their responsibilities towards the pupils in their care. Senior staff holding responsibility for child protection policy and liaison have attended Local Safeguarding Children Board training. Details of the school's behaviour and discipline policy are made available to staff, pupils and parents. a system of reward is also in place. Positive behaviour is promoted and standards of behaviour are high. Discipline across the school community is considered to be fair by pupils. Many pupils remarked on the giving of warnings and staff discussing matters with them initially. The limited disciplinary role of prefects is clear and many pupils view prefects as being supportive. The school's complaint procedure is made available to parents and pupils. The raising of concerns is encouraged at an early stage. Pupils and parents do not identify any difficulties in raising concerns or worries with staff. One complaint has been received by Ofsted in relation to the school since the last inspection. This matter has been suitably dealt with. Fire safety matters are taken seriously by the school. Regular fire drills take place at different times and pupils are familiar with the

fire evacuation procedures. A fire risk assessment is in place and work has progressed in relation to this to support the provision of a safe environment for pupils. Fire fighting equipment is regularly serviced and tested together with emergency lighting and fire alarm systems. Fire safety training has been provided for staff. Professional advice is sought regarding fire and health and safety issues. Clear expectations are placed on pupils to sign in and out of boarding accommodation. Failure to do so is likely to result in disciplinary action being taken. House staff and matrons are clear on the privacy needs of boarders. Guidelines regarding safe care practices when dealing with pupils of the opposite sex are in place for staff involved in boarding house duties. Pupils are also provided with guidelines in relation to the areas that may be visited by members of the opposite sex to ensure privacy of others. Appropriate procedures are in place for the internal and external recruitment of staff. The sample of records examined evidenced the use of these procedures to check the suitability of newly appointed staff. The terms of staff accommodation and contact with boarders by adult members of staff households is discussed at interview. Such matters should be outlined in writing to staff to safeguard the welfare of boarders. A record of visitors is maintained by the school and proof of identification is requested where appropriate. Outside visitors to the boarding areas are kept under staff supervision to safeguard pupils' welfare. Wherever possible, maintenance staff will carry out work in the boarding areas during school hours or holidays when boarders are not present. Boarders' sleeping areas are for their exclusive use. The communal areas of the boarding houses are for boarders and other pupils designated to share these facilities. Staff and pupils are aware of what to do should they encounter a stranger on site. The security of the whole site and in particular, the boarding houses, has recently been reviewed. This follows on from an incident at the end of last year when an intruder gained access to a boarding house. The incident has been fully investigated by the school and police. In response, all window retainers have been replaced throughout the school. Outside lighting and signage has been improved and more CCTV is planned. The coded key pads to access boarding houses are shortly to be replaced by a programmable swipe card system. The actions taken in response to the incident supports the provision of a safe environment for pupils. The public use of the school's sports hall does not establish substantial and unsupervised access to pupils. Usage by local schools and members of the public is formally managed and monitored by the manager and staff of the sports hall. Times are identified for pupils use, others have access at defined times. Some concerns were raised by pupils in relation to the availability of facilities, and by parents in relation to the sharing of facilities with other groups. The arrangements for the public use of facilities should be further communicated to parents and pupils to support the safeguarding of pupils' welfare. Health and safety matters are taken seriously by the school. Safety glass has been fitted and window retainers installed where a significant risk has been identified. Risk assessments are in place for the premises, grounds and activities both on and off site. Health and safety policies are regularly reviewed and pupils are made aware of health and safety matters affecting them across the school community; such matters include out of bound areas.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils are provided with an outstanding level of pastoral care across the school community. Personal support is available for pupils from a wide range of staff, including tutors, house staff, matrons, medical centre staff and the school's Chaplain. Outside counselling support is also available and pupils know how to contact the school's independent listener. Significant changes in pupils' personal circumstances are dealt with sensitively. Such information is passed only to relevant staff in order that pupils can be suitably supported both in school and in their

boarding house. Academic 'clinics' are available outside of formal teaching time to provide pupils with additional guidance and support where required. Pupils are actively encouraged to take problems and worries to any member of staff rather than solely to their designated tutor. Interactions between staff and pupils were seen to be genuinely caring, warm and supportive. Boarders have access to a wide range and choice of activities during evenings and on Sundays, including participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Individual hobbies and interests are supported wherever possible. Boarders and parents gave examples of staff encouraging musical, art and sporting interests. Staff are attentive to ensure that boarders do not over commit themselves and are able to effectively manage the demands placed upon them. A range of indoor and outdoor recreation areas are available to boarders at appropriate times of the day. These allow for different groups to meet up safely and also provide spaces for quiet time and more sedate pursuits. The school positively promotes the integration of all pupils. Good systems are in place to support and assist pupils who have learning or cultural needs. The school has a sustained track record of high performance in enabling pupils to develop personally and socially. Comments received from parents highlight this as a strength of the school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Pupils can contribute their views on the operation of the boarding provision. Formal and informal opportunities are available. These include talking to the Headmaster and house staff, senior and junior committees, house appraisals and prefect and Heads of House meetings. Changes made as a result of listening to pupils include improvements to the dining hall, menus, achievement of a greater consistency between houses and increased 'town time' for sixth form pupils. Consultation has, and continues to take place, in relation to the refurbishment of boarding accommodation. Pupils commented favourably on the improvements that have already been made. Payphones are available for pupils' private use in the boarding houses. Office telephones are also made available when necessary, with particular provision in place for pupils from overseas. Appropriate helpline and outside contact numbers are displayed on notice boards and pupil handbooks, including those of Ofsted. There is a positive attitude to boarders' family and parental contact. Parents are welcome to visit their child at school and are encouraged to attend school concerts, sports matches and other events. Staff contact parents about their child's progress and any concerns. Parents are also encouraged to contact the school. Comments received from parents identify good lines of communication from the school in relation to the welfare and progress of pupils and regarding the general life of the school community.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Details of the school's boarding principles and practice and relevant school policies are made available to parents and pupils. Comprehensive handbooks are provided to pupils and staff and are regularly updated. House handbooks are also produced and made available. The Headmaster and designated members of the senior management team have regular oversight of the school's records regarding discipline, complaints, accidents and risk assessments. Boarders are aware of who is on duty and who is responsible for them at specific times both within the boarding house and during free time. Boarders also have knowledge of where staff sleep at night and

they feel able to call upon staff if necessary. House staff undertake a tour of the building every night to confirm that pupils are present. A house duty rota is followed in practice. Suitable arrangements are in place for duty cover in times of staff sickness and absence. Boarders report that they can always find a member of staff when they need to. Training opportunities are provided and made available to staff, including child protection, first aid and wider pastoral care matters. Regular meetings take place for housemasters and housemistresses and matrons to discuss boarding practice and the pastoral care of pupils. Systems are in place for the annual appraisal of staff, including matrons. Job descriptions are in place and staff know who they are accountable to.

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 there is a written agreement between the school and any adult not employed by the school but living in the same building as boarding accommodation (NMS 39.4)
- inform parents and pupils of the arrangements for the public use of the sports hall (NMS 42.4).

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.