

Box Hill 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

Box Hill School was founded by Mr Roy McComish, a housemaster from Gordonstoun. The school follows the philosophy of Dr. Kurt Hahn, the founder of Gordonstoun in Scotland and Salem in Germany, both now sister schools of Box Hill. In 1966 Box Hill was one of six founder members of the international group named 'Round Square' based on common ideals and a belief in pupil responsibility, service to others, outdoor adventure, and international understanding. The school has up to 360 pupils of which 159 are boarders. There are five boarding houses two of which are sixth form. The school has an all round approach to both the education and pastoral care of the young people. The school has a multi cultural community and looks to meet any needs presented by the overseas students.

Summary

The inspection took place over the course of four on site inspection days, preceded by a pre-planning meeting and student survey. The inspection team comprised of three inspectors from Ofsted. This inspection focused on specific standards aimed at assessing the welfare of the students who are boarding at the school. Information on which to assess the school's performance was gathered in a variety of ways. These included the examination of documentary information that was supplied by the school, discussions with students in small groups, student guided tours of the boarding houses and recreational areas, as well as discussions with the Headmaster and a wide range of school staff. The senior management team at the college have a wealth of knowledge and experience to support the staff and students at the school. The school is effective at ensuring that the students who board receive the appropriate support from staff to help them achieve progress, both academic and personal. The staff team are good with updating all of the relevant information needed to make students' time at the school a success. The staff team work effectively at gaining the trust of the students and advocate for them in a positive manner. There are some key areas that require improvement. In discussion with the Headmaster and staff it was evident that the school had not complied with all the recommendations made at the last Commission for Social Care Inspection three years ago. Recommendations made regarding recruitment and the development of welfare plans have not been addressed although at the time of the inspection a new recruitment process had been developed. These issues were raised by the inspectors during the course of this inspection and recommendations made to improve the service. Overall the school is warm and very welcoming and the students are very supportive of the school and its ethos.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

A five year development and strategic plan is in place that is a working document and includes plans to develop a long term strategy to develop boarding provision across the school. A new recruitment policy and procedure has been introduced and applies to all new staff appointments. The school will need to ensure this process applies to all existing staff and ensure that such staff have all such checks as outlined in Standard 38. Child Protection, Staff Training and Anti Bullying Policies are all given high priority at the school. The school has spent a considerable sum of money refurbishing accommodation particularly for sixth form students. Plans evidenced during this inspection identified further refurbishment particularly in Constantine House. There

is a clear understanding of the principles of social care and for the most part good policies and procedures are in place.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

There is a newly appointed co-ordinator of Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) and she is currently further developing the curriculum for Year 7 to Year 11. The nurses are not involved in the delivery of this programme but sometimes introduce specialist speakers where appropriate. The curriculum is flexible to the extent that current issues can be slotted in and much of the material is self-generated. There are DVDs and materials from Kidscape and the NSPCC as well as textbooks from which tutors select their lesson plans. Outside speakers are invited and parents attended a workshop on cyber-bullying and technological advances earlier this year. Pupils reported that they are well supported by staff on all matters of personal welfare and are comfortable talking to a range of staff. Parents submit a consent form/questionnaire when the pupil arrives in the school and it is updated annually. Contact details and notes of significant medical conditions, treatments and immunisations are included. On arrival, new pupils receive a full medical and all subsequent immunisations are provided. Informal care plans are in place for pupils with significant illnesses and there is evidence of good care, appropriate support and contact with relevant, outside agencies. The school must formalise these specific, individual, welfare plans and, as far as possible, seek the agreement of parents and pupils as well as the school. The local GP practice holds surgeries at the school twice a week and there are both male and female doctors. Pupils can choose to be seen privately. The medical centre is situated close to the main building and has been upgraded providing two twin bedded rooms each with en-suite shower, toilet and washing facilities. The Medical Centre is staffed by two qualified nurses and it operates between 09.30 and 18.00. Pupils, who are ill in the evenings or at the weekend, remain in their house until they are able to go home if their condition is likely to absent them from school for several days. House parents, who have up to date First Aid qualifications look after them until the nurses arrive in the morning. Medication, confidential records and equipment are all securely stored. There are some written protocols for some health-related topics but there is no over-arching policy on health promotion which would bring together the whole school policy and procedure. There are appropriate medication records in most houses and in the Medical Centre but audit trails of medication were not evident in some houses. Pupils signed a form when they had been assessed to self-medicate indicating their responsibility to take the medication as prescribed and to store it safely in their lockable space. Pupils below Year 12 are required to hand in any non-prescription medication. The school employs a contract company, Caterlink, to provide management of the kitchen and all meals. The catering manager is very experienced and aware of the need to educate pupils in healthy eating as well as providing three main meals a day. The dining hall is bright and spacious with a well-placed servery displaying the food in an attractive manner. Despite the negative comments in the questionnaire, in discussion pupils commented that the food had improved. Inspectors sampled 10 meals in the dining room and the food was of good quality with plenty of choice and good quality fresh fruit. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly. Drinking water is available throughout the school and in the boarding houses. Pupils are able to make snacks in their houses and full meals in the sixth form and they are pleased at the re-instatement of tea at 17.00 on weekdays.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The school's anti-bullying policy and procedure is available to parents, staff and pupils. All pupils have to sign an anti-bullying contract on arrival at school. Good relationships and caring for others are fostered in the PHSE programme. The policy reviewed in 2007 defines bullying, including cyber bullying, and gives clear actions to be followed by all staff, Syndicates and any pupil who witnesses bullying or is bullied. The Syndicates have a role in the anti-bullying policy but their responsibilities are not clearly defined in writing. The majority of questionnaires stated that bullying is not a problem in the school and the few who raised it as an issue declared that it was usually in the form of teasing, name calling and occasionally text messages. In discussion pupils confirmed that the school acts quickly and effectively if any bullying is reported. The school provides a warm, friendly atmosphere and stresses team work and caring for others in keeping with the Round Square Ideals. The school has a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy and the designated person is an active member of the local Safeguarding Children Team. Five members of the boarding staff have attended the two day Safeguarding training offered by the Local Authority. Staff confirm they are given regular training briefings and the school follows the correct and required procedures regarding notifications and fully co-operates with the statutory processes in Surrey. There is a very good complaints policy available to parents but there are no formal complaints recorded in the Headmaster's central log. Pupils commented in discussion that they can usually resolve complaints at the house level and they feel very safe and well cared for by the staff who demonstrate a genuine regard for their wellbeing and protection. The contact telephone number for Ofsted should be included in the complaints procedure. Supervision is evident and pupils always know who is on duty and where to find them as staff strike a good balance between giving them space to grow and safeguarding them from harm. The school has a comprehensive behaviour management plan, with clearly stated expectations and a code of sanctions, which are in the pupil guide and displayed on notice boards around the school and houses. In discussion the pupils confirm that the code of conduct is reasonable and imposed fairly, enabling them to develop and make decisions in the full knowledge of penalties they may incur. The school has a current fire safety policy; fire evacuation notices and fire routes are clearly displayed. There is evidence of current tests on fire extinguishers, fire alarms and emergency lighting systems. Pupils confirm there are regular fire drills and fire alarm tests. Most windows above ground floor level are fitted with restrictors; however, this was not the case in Constantine House and a recommendation has been made to ensure that all such windows are fitted with appropriate restrictors. Pupils' safety and welfare are protected well during high-risk activities both on and off the site and the school only uses facilities, which are licensed with the relevant national governing bodies, and only staff with relevant qualifications lead these activities. There are no reports of intrusion into pupils' personal privacy and shower cubicles and door locks work thus affording the pupils security when they are changing and washing. Pupils comment that they are treated with respect by most staff. All staff have current Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and there are procedures in place for recruiting staff. Some of these procedures are not followed consistently, for example, there is no record of speaking to referees and some interview notes are missing. The school has recently reviewed these recruitment practices and is in the process of updating files according to the new robust policy. There is evidence that taxi drivers and contract staff have been subject to CRB checks. All visitors must sign in on arrival and wear a visitor's badge on site. Pupils' accommodation is kept thoroughly secure from public intrusion by key pads on the doors and CCTV; the latter being used in a proactive manner. There is a risk assessment on the public right of way through the campus and it is clearly signed and well lit. There are comprehensive measures in place to protect pupils and staff from safety hazards and a wide range of risk assessments for outings, transport, activities etc. Outdoor and recreational areas are well

presented and suitably risk assessed. The school employs consultants to advise them on health and safety matters and risk assessments. The most recent report was in November 2007. There is evidence of Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) on appliances in the houses and on site. Contact with parents is easy as pupils are allowed to have mobile phones and there are telephone cubicles in the houses. Pupils have their own e-mail account and can use the internet to e-mail home. Internet access is currently being installed in the sixth form houses.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is a good range of indoor and outdoor activities available to the boarding students and staff are committed to encouraging students to try out different opportunities. A number of boarding students commented in discussion groups about the lack of organised activities for sixth formers. While they acknowledged they valued their independence it was evident they would like some organised group activities. The students' working days are busy, but students generally commented that they have the opportunity to watch television and relax in the later part of the evenings and during the weekends. Some students commented that the long days left them feeling quite tired. Students are able to access the internet in all boarding houses through school provided computers and there are adequate safeguards in place to protect students from risk via the internet. Boarders have access to a number of staff to provide help and guidance and in practice this is often the Housemaster or Housemistress. House staff and tutors in the houses provide good quality pastoral care. Tutors are house based which provides consistency and enables them to have a greater understanding of each student in the house they work in. A counselling service is available to the students who can either be referred through school staff or self refer, however, one of the counsellors has not been subjected to the full staff recruitment procedure insofar as an application form had not been completed or an interview held. The school also has a fully independent listener. Boarders stated that the school Syndicate members and gap year students are a helpful source of support and guidance. However, there is a need to ensure Syndicate members receive training in safeguarding and anti-bullying procedures. The school has an approach that values the diverse needs of its boarders and this is evidenced through the tutor scheme, regular house meetings, school council meetings and various other groups that meet throughout the school so that issues on gender, physical difference, race, religion, cultural or linguistic background are addressed appropriately. The school makes good arrangements to cope with the needs of those students whose first language is not English and overseas boarders say they have been made to feel very welcome. The school is attentive in ensuring that any demands on boarders, for example, sports practise, do not adversely affect their welfare, although a number of students felt that they had very little free time. Boarding space is arranged so that those who board full time and older students are more likely to have their own room, or a room shared with one other person. A number of students in the school commented that it was not always easy to find space to be on their own and to be private. All students are encouraged to achieve educationally and socially to their full potential and the good teacher student relationships evident throughout the inspection were supported by the student questionnaires. The discussions with individual year groups across the boarding houses indicated that most boarding students made friends very quickly when they joined the school and a number indicated that they felt that the school was very much their second home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The school provides a number of opportunities for students to make their views known about the boarding provision, such as the school and sixth form councils, food committee and regular house meetings. Some changes have resulted from students expressing their views through these forums and young people generally feel listened to. The school has plans to further improve ways of listening to students' views. Students benefit from supportive relationships with staff and can seek support and guidance from staff members and designated sixth form students of their choice. Students also have access to the school chaplain and independent counsellors who are outside the boarding and teaching staff of the school. Students are able to contact the counsellors directly or through house parents. Students are able to have private contact with their families through visits, the telephone, emails and letters. Information about help-line numbers is provided and staff communicate with parents over any welfare concerns relating to students. Support and guidance from staff and established students helps new students to settle into the school. They are also provided with comprehensive written information about school routines and rules. Boarders have access to activities inside and outside the school during weekends and evenings and the weekend programme of activities and outings is popular amongst the students. Staff exercise care over the choice of outside facilities and outings are risk assessed for particular groups of students. Rules governing older students leaving the school site in pairs and in groups, both ensure their safety and promote their increasing independence. Boarders have access to suitable newspapers, magazines and television. Students benefit from sound relationships with staff who look after them fairly and well. Any disagreements between students and staff are dealt with appropriately.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The school provides secure facilities for students to store their personal possessions and valuables, such as lockable drawers in bedrooms and secure lockers for laptops and food. The school also emphasises the importance of students keeping their money and possessions safe. Unfortunately this advice is not always followed by students and some losses of property are reported. The general provision of boarding accommodation at the school is reasonable; the accommodation for those students in the sixth form, however, is excellent. Improvements have been made as part of a rolling programme of work and furniture and soft furnishings have been replaced in some parts of the accommodation. Heating, ventilation and noise levels appear to be satisfactory. There are no major discrepancies in the quality of accommodation, however, Constantine House does require urgent refurbishment with some new or additional furnishings. It was noted that building work had commenced to provide extra facilities for this particular house and Inspectors were advised that a programme of internal refurbishment would take place during the summer holidays. Standards of cleanliness are generally satisfactory but there is room for improvement in some parts of the boarding accommodation. Students' sleeping accommodation is sufficiently spacious and adequately furnished. Sufficient storage facilities are provided and students can personalise their rooms. Students share appropriately and have some choice over this, with requests to change rooms being dealt with sympathetically. There are sufficient toilet and washing facilities for students though standards of decoration vary. Each of the boarding houses was found to be well heated and lit at the time of the inspection although some of the students in the school commented that the heating was either too hot or too cold. It became apparent in discussion with one of the Houseparents that the heating could not be regulated in some houses. It was, therefore, either too hot or too cold. Students also stated that when taking a shower the water was tepid as opposed to being hot. Students can easily obtain any necessary minor personal or stationary items from the school shop or

from a shop situated nearby in the local village. No students are currently accommodated in lodgings arranged by the school, either during term-time or in the school vacations.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The school has a clear Statement of Boarding known as, "The Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice" which is available to parents, students and staff. It is a comprehensive document and sets out the school's main boarding principles in three different areas, 'Social, Pastoral and Recreational Development' 'Turning Principles into Practice' and 'The Box Hill Experience: Key Elements in our Practice'. The school's governing board do not have a clear system or process to monitor welfare provision in the school and no governor is appointed to oversee any boarding aspect of the school although one governor does have lead responsibility for safeguarding matters. There are no major discrepancies in principles or practice of boarding between different boarding houses although it is noted that one house did not have a house captain. Students spoken to stated that it was important the house had a house captain as it helped with leadership within the house. Sleeping areas, recreational areas and washing facilities are reasonably and appropriately separated for students. There is a signing in and out system for boarders, so that staff can keep track of them at all times. There are clear guidelines about who can leave the school premises and when. When boarders are returning home for holidays or returning to the school at the end of holidays, they are expected to have provided clear travel arrangements. Staffing levels are well managed and staff are able to respond to the varying needs, wishes and activities of the students. The school has an excellent plan to address any major crises that relate to the welfare of the boarders. The school does have a system of monitoring risk assessments, although these are not currently monitored twice a term as laid down in the relevant standard. Electrical appliance testing for school and student equipment is up to date. Staff have access to various courses, in good boarding practice, run by the Boarding School Association (BSA), however, the school should identify the training needs of all boarding staff and provide an appropriate training programme. School senior management have responsibility for checking boarding house disciplinary records and were verbally able to evidence that they were completed but there was no documented evidence to confirm that these checks had been carried out. All staff, including domestic and pastoral care staff know to whom they are accountable. The number of staff available for the supervision of boarders is sufficient for the number of boarders, the activities they are involved in and the different age and gender groups. Boarders report that they can find a member of staff when they need to and boarders know which member of staff is on duty in the evening and how to access duty staff sleeping in overnight. Staffing for organised trips away from the school is good and exceeds current Government guidance. Any role for spouses or partners of staff within the boarding houses is made clear and all non-staff adults living in the boarding houses are appropriately CRB checked. The school ensures that all new members of boarding staff receive induction training before they start work at the school, including child protection, although there was no written evidence that either had been completed. The teaching staff directly involved with boarding take part in a regular boarding appraisal process but other staff, notably the school's nurses, do not currently have an appraisal process. Gap students are for the most part well briefed and monitored, although they did not have the opportunity of attending the BSA Induction programme prior to the commencement of their duties within the school. Students and parents stated in the majority of surveys that they were satisfied with the level of pastoral care and services provided to the boarding students of the school. The outcome for young people in this section is judged as satisfactory as a number of key standards are met but there are also

weaknesses in some procedures and documentation which require amendment in order to ensure young people are fully protected.

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 the school prepares written welfare plans agreed with parents for any pupil with special welfare needs. (National Minimum Standard 17)
- ensure that the duties and responsibilities of Syndicate members are clearly defined and provide formal training in Child Protection and anti-bullying policies to all such members. (National Minimum Standards 4.5, 3.8 and 13.3)
- ensure that Ofsted contact numbers are included in Complaints Policies and Notice Boards in Boarding Houses. (National Minimum Standard 5.4)
- ensure there is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing that includes all elements of this standard. (National Minimum Standard 38)
- ensure that all windows above ground floor in boarding accommodation are fitted with restrictors or alternative safety measures. (National Minimum Standard 47)
- ensure that all persons, such as counsellors, identified to boarders for contact purposes have been subject to full checking procedures in the same manner as school staff, with a satisfactory outcome. (National Minimum Standard 14)
- ensure that at governing board level an effective system is put into place to monitor boarding welfare. (National Minimum Standard 8)
- ensure that a more robust and effective monitoring system is developed to include risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents to identify any issues which require action by a senior member of the school staff. (National Minimum Standard 23)
- ensure that the development plan for boarding continues to upgrade accommodation to a high standard. (National Minimum Standard 42)
- ensure that written documentary evidence is available that all staff who undertake boarding duties have received induction training in boarding when newly appointed. (National Minimum Standard 34)
- Ensure a more comprehensive and consistent appraisal process is developed to encompass all staff with boarding responsibilities or those that care for boarding students. (National Minimum Standard 34)

- ensure that the heating and hot water in the boarding houses can be regulated and is sufficiently warm in winter. (National Minimum Standard 40)
- ensure that there is a more robust and consistent programme of cleaning across all areas of the boarding accommodation. (National Minimum Standard 40)

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.