

Handcross Park School

Inspection report for boarding school

Unique reference number	SC014549
Inspection date	21 April 2008
Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of Inspection	Key

Address	Handcross Park School London Road Handcross HAYWARDS HEATH West Sussex RH17 6HF
Telephone number	01444 400526
Email	whilton@handxpark.com
Registered person	Newells School Trust Ltd
Head of care	Warren Hilton
Head / Principal	Warren Hilton
Date of last inspection	26 January 2004

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

Handcross Park is a small rural school with the capacity to accommodate a maximum of 30 boarders. It is primarily a day school. The school currently provides boarding accommodation for children between the ages of seven and 14 years. Children can board for a maximum of four nights a week. There is no weekend boarding. The school has an active casual boarding system that parents utilise regularly. The boarding accommodation at the school is located on two floors, one for boys and one for girls. Communal areas have satellite television and adequate toilets and washing facilities for both sexes. Accommodation is in dorms with a maximum of six boarders in each dorm. The school grounds are vast with a wide variety of activities on offer outside of education time.

Summary

This is an announced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. Economic wellbeing was also inspected. This is a good service with many outstanding features. Boarders' relationships are enhanced by the good relationships between staff and children. Both parents and children were surveyed prior to the inspection taking place, with very positive results. Only minor issues were raised which the school are already aware of and are taking action to rectify. The school is managed very well with strong leadership and achieves a family atmosphere where all boarders receive excellent pastoral care. Boarders live in a safe environment protected by staff who are suitably trained and committed to their roles. Recent improvements to the catering provision and boarding environment have resulted in very positive feedback from parents and boarders. The school has plans to further develop the areas identified in the recommendations section of the report.

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 welfare visit in November 2005 looked at recommendations that resulted from the last full welfare inspection carried out in January 2004. All recommendations had been addressed and no further recommendations were made. Therefore, there were no recommendations to follow up at this full welfare inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The children receive an effective programme of health education appropriate to their ages. The programme is comprehensive and part of the school curriculum. The school does not experience any issues around smoking, alcohol or substance abuse mainly due to the ages of the children. The children benefit from boarding in a small school with a family environment. Boarders receive a high standard of care relating to their health needs. Information gained from parents helps the school provide the necessary help and support each child may need regarding any health issues. Health records are kept up to date. Boarders have access to high quality treatment and administration of first aid. A designated children's welfare officer is available during the hours of 08.30 and 17:00 Monday to Friday. Outside this time boarders receive care from the house master and house mistress. Procedures for the administration of first aid and medication, both prescribed and non prescribed, are highly developed and sound

in practice. Boarders who are ill receive care from suitably trained staff but in the main are able to return home due to the closeness of their homes in the surrounding community to the school. The children's welfare officer is very much liked by the boarders and they feel very comfortable in seeking her assistance. She works in the heart of the school and keeps herself up to date with training. Networking with other local schools helps to further develop her skills and knowledge. Excellent monitoring processes are in place that enable the head master to monitor records, such as the accident log, on a daily and weekly basis. Recent changes to the catering provision have resulted in both boarders and parents expressing positive comments. Boarders receive a varied and nutritious diet that they can contribute to in the menu choices. The newly employed catering manager has plans to develop the menu further over the next few months. The last environmental health inspection carried out on 27/02/2008 identified minor recommendations that the school has already addressed or is currently addressing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Boarders confirm there are very low levels of bullying in the school and staff act immediately and effectively to any information that bullying might be taking place. Boarders and staff are very clear what the school's policy on bullying is. A clear and sensitive policy ensures staff and children know who to go to and what help they can get. The school's ethos is to promote respect which it appears to achieve. Children are protected from abuse by a sound policy on child protection and safeguarding together with informed staff. The head master is the designated lead for child protection in the school. All staff attend regular training around abuse and the procedures to follow if they are worried or concerned about a child, or if an allegation is made to them. Staff are clear of their roles in this area. Further training is due in September 2008 for all staff. In practice the school has not needed to activate this procedure but does keep itself up to date with changing legislation and local procedures. Boarders live in an environment where discipline is low key and not a major problem. Boarders have suitable information to know and understand what methods of discipline would be used. These are usually in the form of detentions. Boarders, parents and staff all have access to the school's complaints policy that does not reflect the changing inspection body to now read Ofsted. In practice any issues raised by parents are dealt with before they become a complaint. Boarders have numerous avenues they can use to raise issues they may have. These are dealt with professionally and quickly. A prefect system operates within very clear guidance known to staff and boarders. Prefects are sound in the knowledge of the boundaries their role carries. Boarders confirmed the system operates in a very fair way. Boarders are protected from fire by having suitable and regularly inspected fire fighting equipment. Staff are trained and carry out regular fire drills so children are well informed of what action to take if a fire broke out. The local fire and rescue service carry out inspections that identify areas the school needs to address, currently there is no breach of the fire regulations. Some of the current fire notices in the boarding house are out of date and not written in a child friendly format appropriate for the age group that stay in the boarding house. Boarders can have private time or "me time" and are happy that staff respect their privacy. The school has clear guidance for staff around supervision of boarders not being intrusive. In general children are protected by the school's robust recruitment process, however, the school must be sure that all staff who commence work have a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check completed by the school. The school does not allow unsupervised contact with children whilst awaiting for a CRB check. The school employs "gap" students who are subject to a robust recruitment process. Boarders live in an environment that is safe and secure. All areas of the boarding house are checked regularly for any health and safety issues and are

addressed immediately. Comprehensive three yearly health and safety reports are carried out by external consultants. All trips and visits are risk assessed to ensure children will be safe and any risks identified are addressed. Risk assessments are carried out for the grounds and buildings. Boarders are very aware of which areas on site are out of bounds.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school has a well thought through approach to providing its boarders with a range of support and opportunities that encourages them to achieve educationally and socially and to their full potential. Boarders have a wide range of staff they can go to for support, both at school or independent from the school. Relationships between staff and children are excellent with children feeling well cared for. Respect between staff and pupils is mutual with excellent relationships that are both caring and highly professional. Boarders have equal access, provision and rights with no special privileges for any individual other than a later bed time slot for older children. The school as a whole has a strict policy that does not encourage or permit discrimination of any form. The school is based upon a firm Christian foundation, however, it is aware of and sympathetic towards the needs of other ethnic and religious groups. It does not provide for non Christians' form of worship. Special dietary needs are catered for. This information is provided clearly to prospective parents. Boarders have access to a wide range of evening activities that they enjoy. Any suggestions to change activities on offer are listened to and put into motion. Children are listened to and wishes, views or opinions expressed are acted on.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The school puts huge effort into fostering boarders' self worth through encouraging positive relationships between themselves the staff and the school. It actively encourages and values boarders' participation in consultation and discussion about the school. The school has plans to develop this area even further in the next few months. Systems for listening and obtaining views are integrated into the running of the school. Boarders have many avenues where they can voice their opinions and views. These are listened to and acted on if appropriate. Boarders participate in meetings specifically for boarders. Suggestion boxes situated around the school are checked daily and if necessary any action taken fed back to the child. Staff respond to boarders in a positive and supportive way. Children feel they are listened to with changes made as a result of expressing their views and opinions. The school demonstrates a very positive attitude to boarders' family and parental contact. Boarders are able to contact family and friends by e-mail and telephone. They have access to a public and a private phone plus they have designated times they are able to use their mobile phones.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarders' accommodation has undergone much change since the last full welfare inspection. Physical changes have made it a much more family orientated environment. Dorms are bright and child friendly with new provision of beds and furniture. The number of beds in each dorm has decreased giving children more space. There is an on going programme to further update some furnishings and fittings. Issues around some dorms being a little cold in the winter are being addressed with a new boiler being installed during the summer 2008. The accommodation

is clean and well maintained. The toilet and washing provision is at the level described in the National Minimum Standards for Boarding schools.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a very effective and coordinated management system. The style of management ensures that staff are clear about their task and responsibilities and that boarders' feel that the school is run with their welfare in mind. The quality of information available to parents, children and staff about boarding principles and practice is very good and easily accessible in both paper and electronic formats. The school is working towards being an eco friendly environment and this has resulted in more information being made available via the electronic route. Weekly newsletters are available electronically for parents to access. Practice and records are monitored by senior staff very regularly, weekly in most cases. Any issues identified are addressed immediately by the head master. Boarders are supervised by experienced and competent staff outside of school time. Staff numbers are very good with the house master and his wife taking the main role, with the help of teaching staff and gap students. Gap students do not work unsupervised and undertake training with the Boarding School Association (BSA) when they commence at the school. Boarders know who is on duty each evening; the same staff group work each week. Boarders only board for a maximum of four nights each week, arriving Monday am and going home after school Friday. The school has a very well developed system of risk assessment. All activities are risk assessed to a high standard. Boarders are cared for by staff with designated roles, and whose job descriptions identify their boarding roles and responsibilities. The school is currently reviewing job descriptions for staff who work in boarding to ensure all staff are in receipt of updated job descriptions. The boarding is managed by a house master and his wife, who work closely together to ensure a friendly, happy environment. Staff receive two yearly appraisals that include areas related to specific boarding duties. The head master and his staff are very well supported by a sound and effective board of trustees.

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
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- update the complaints policy to reflect the changing inspection body to Ofsted (NMS 5)
- update the fire notices and ensure they are child friendly in format (NMS 26)
- ensure all staff are subject to a robust recruitment process, especially concerning Criminal Record Bureau checks (NMS 38)
- continue with the on going programme to replace beds, mattresses, furniture and fittings (NMS 40)

- ensure all staff have an up to date job description. (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.