

# The Mount School

Inspection report for boarding school

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC015847
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 November 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Lynne Busby / Jacqueline Malcolm
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Address</b>	The Mount School Dalton Terrace YORK YO24 4DD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01904 667500
<b>Email</b>	bursar@mount.n-yorks.sch.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	The Mount School Estates (York) Limited
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Diana Gant
<b>Nominated person</b>	
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	20 February 2008

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](http://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

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 to 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 school fully acknowledges the shortfalls identified at the last inspection and has taken seriously the need to address these. Implementation has been prompt and rigorous and boarders are safeguarded.

The school is well managed and there is a supportive governing body. There is good communication across all staff. The boarders are provided with healthy food options that meet their needs the choice is outstanding. Child protection is effectively managed with good links with outside agencies. The school has a very good extra curricular structure of activities to develop skills in a variety of areas for pupils. The ethos of respect in the school is reflected in the girls' good behaviour and they represent the school well. The school is outstanding in welcoming and celebrating diversity of boarders and pupils from overseas they are integrated well into the school.

As a result of this inspection some shortfalls were identified the fittings and equipment are not maintained to an adequate standard to meet the boarders needs, the surface temperature of the radiators is very hot; the cleanliness in some of the bathrooms and showers in College House is inadequate; there are some health and safety issues such as trailing flexes in rooms have not been regularly checked to identify hazards; there is a swimming pool which is used by the boarders. The swimmers are supervised by a life saver who is also a pupil. This only occurs one session per week as part of an after school activity. At all other times the pool is supervised by a qualified teacher with lifeguard qualifications. At such times this does not adequately provide for someone to call for assistance in the event of an accident; staff have regular training but there is no training record that identifies when staff need training updates.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection a number of recommendations were made and a substantial amount of work has been undertaken to ensure this has been completed.

There is a clear record of fire drills undertaken in the boarding houses and staff and pupils are fully aware of the fire procedures.

The medications stock control and disposal of medications has been reviewed and an accountable system is now in place in the boarding houses.

The staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and job descriptions are in place. The staff have a review of performance through an appraisal system. All new staff have an induction which includes the school's policies, ethos of the school and recording. The level of staffing has been reviewed and activities are available for boarders at weekends. There is a robust recruitment process in place to protect the boarders from harm.

There is an established communication between departments and this includes pupil communication. There is mechanism for feedback to pupils views that have been raised in College House this is being further developed in School House.

The telephones are all working and provide privacy. Boarders are aware of who is on duty at night and this is clearly displayed on notice boards in the boarding houses.

There is a clear policy in place when boarders go missing without authority and this is followed in practice.

There has been some progress with the showering facilities and maintenance and furnishings in the boarding houses with redecoration of some rooms and replacement of curtains. This is ongoing.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The health needs of boarders are promoted and are met to a good standard. There are appropriate policies that address health risks, including alcohol, smoking and illegal substances. The school nurses provide advice, support and guidance on a range of personal, social and health issues, which is beneficial to boarders, raises their awareness and promotes self-protection. Boarders have access to health professionals, a counsellor and a designated doctor who regularly visits the school and is available to pupils in confidence. Boarders may keep their own doctors, dentists and opticians. Specialist health services are also available to young people who need it.

Boarders benefit from good quality medical treatment and first aid. The registered nurses who are located in the medical centre have an open door policy. This ensures that boarders know where to go if they feel unwell or need treatment. Medical consents are in place for emergency treatment and administration of non prescribed medication and clear records are maintained. First aid boxes are located in the boarding houses and are well stocked and boarding staff are first aid trained. Secure medication cabinets are also located in boarding houses. School medical staff are responsible for overseeing first aid and medication in the boarding houses. Medication stock control and disposal of medication in boarding houses has been reviewed to improve the recording of medication between boarding and medical staff. This ensures a safer system for boarders who are in receipt of medication. The facilities for sick boarders are good and there is an appropriate child-friendly sick bay for younger pupils. Nursing staff are available overnight if required. Boarders confirm that they feel well looked after when they are unwell.

Boarders benefit from good quality catering provision that meets their individual needs. Weekly menus are available and show a good choice of balanced and healthy meals with good portions of fruit and vegetables. Pupils are listened to through the food council where boarders and day pupils have an opportunity to discuss meal preferences. The meals served take into account the cultural, health and special dietary needs of pupils. The needs of boarders who are fasting during the period of Ramadan are appropriately supported and respected. Pupils are encouraged to serve themselves and are not discouraged from having additional portions. The dining area provides sufficient space for boarding pupils to dine and they have time to finish their meals properly. Most boarders confirm that they enjoy their meals. Pupils also use the kitchens in their boarding accommodation to prepare snacks and drinks.

Staff who prepare meals have appropriate food handling and hygiene training. Recommendations following annual environmental health inspections have been addressed. These measures reduce the likelihood of harm to pupils.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The boarders confirmed that bullying is not tolerated in the school and described times when people were unkind to each other but staff intervened. The ethos of the school is that people respect each other and this underpins all areas of behaviour. There is a clear code of conduct policy that identifies the punishments that are given. There are few sanctions given to pupils and significant sanctions are addressed by the head teacher. The boarders see the punishments as fair and are a credit to the school in how they behave.

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 procedures when a pupil goes missing without authority and whistleblowing. The school's child protection coordinator has good links with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. The staff have received training or a briefing in child protection which is being updated and demonstrated a good understanding of dealing with child protection issues in practice.

The school has a complaints procedure which is available to parents. Boarders have information on who to contact if they have concerns. Complaints records are kept by the head teacher. The records are clear and show how complaints are responded to promptly and demonstrates that the procedures are followed in practice.

Boarders are protected by the school's practice in relation to recruitment of new staff. The monitoring of visitors is excellent and both staff and boarders are vigilant in ensuring that visitors are always accompanied around the school.

The supervision of boarders does not unnecessarily intrude on privacy. Some pupils said that staff knock on bedroom doors but do not always wait for an answer before entering. The bedrooms have been arranged so there is space for boarders to dress in private and this is good practice.

All relevant maintenance is carried out in a timely fashion. Boarders are proficient in the fire evacuation procedures and risk assessments are in place. Risk assessments are in place for building and the grounds, however, the boarding houses had a number of trailing flexes that

are not monitored. This does not fully safeguard the boarders. Boarders are safe from public intrusion because buildings and access to the school are secure.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

The staff show an excellent commitment to supporting and encouraging boarders helping them to enjoy and achieve. The boarders get on well with staff and are confident in raising their concerns with any member of staff. There is also a personal tutor system and the boarders can discuss academic and personal matters with their tutors. The school has a school counsellor and the boarders can make appointments to see her through the medical centre.

The school has an integrated international community and welcomes girls of all faiths and nationalities into a calm and caring community. The school are sensitive to religious and cultural needs and boarders can practice their own religions. Boarders who do not have English as their first language receive help from the appropriate department and the school also has an international study programme.

There is an excellent range of after school activities including creative hobbies such as jewellery making, sport, music and more serious issues. Boarders are enthusiastic about the activities and enjoy participating. At weekends there are optional on site and off site activities for all ages which also integrates the different age groups and also there are other joint activities. Boarders make a contribution to the wider community through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, charities and other schemes. Boarders also have free time for relaxing.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Information for boarders is informative and provides a clear insight into life at the school. There is a planned and structured process of induction and guidance for new boarders. Boarding rules are also located in bedrooms. There is an established buddying system, matching new boarders with older pupils. Boarders confirm that they felt welcomed as newcomers to the school and feel well integrated.

Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute their views about the operation of the boarding provision. For example, monthly house meetings, school council, food council and individual consultation between boarding staff and boarders. Most boarders say they feel listened to if they raise an issue. However, some boarders do not always feel listened to when staff do not promptly respond.

Boarders benefit from good facilities for them to keep in touch with their families in private. Information for parents about contact is provided and they are encouraged to ring the school if they have any concerns. Staff also keep in touch with parents if they need to discuss welfare issues. Boarders have a number of ways to keep in touch with parents. The current issues for most boarders is the limited use of the internet. This is being resolved by the school. Phones are available in boarding houses in areas that afford boarders privacy. Most boarders also have mobile phones, which they hand in to staff at the end of each day. Contact numbers for help lines are visible near phones for boarders in distress or have problems.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

The boarders accommodation is in two houses, the senior girls are in School House in the main building and sixth form girls live in College House which is a very short distance from the school. In both houses the boarders' rooms are generally spacious and there are good common rooms and kitchens and the houses are homely. Some rooms, including bathrooms, have been refurbished and this programme is ongoing. Curtains and some carpets throughout the accommodation have been replaced. There is, however, a need for further upgrading especially in bathrooms where there are also cleanliness issues. Also, there are general maintenance issues around heating, fittings and equipment. Boarders personalise their rooms with posters and personal items. There are lockable spaces available and boarders are advised to bring in small lockable boxes. The senior house operates a pocket money bank and staff will store valuables.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

There is a suitable statement of boarding principles and practice available to parents, boarders and staff. There is information available for new boarders and a clear handbook that includes policies and procedures for staff to follow.

There have been significant changes to the organisation of the boarding houses. There have been some improvements to decoration of bedrooms which is continuing. There are new staff teams in place for both School and College House. There have been changes in the management of boarding and new staff teams are in place. The communication between boarding and school staff contributes to the welfare of boarders. There is a health and safety policy in place and risk assessments are undertaken. There is a swimming pool which is supervised by a pupil who is a life saver, however, there is no other person present if there is a problem. There is a procedure and risk assessment completed.

There are sufficient staff to supervise boarders and a rota is displayed so boarders know who is on duty at all times. The school provides staff with job descriptions outlining their duties. Staff have an induction and have an annual appraisal which reviews staff's boarding practice. Staff have opportunities to attend training events but there is no record of a training completed. The lack of a training programme does not provide an overview of training achieved and where training is required.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. All boarders are provided with opportunities that promote their development and for them to reach their full potential.

The school is well managed and the head teacher and designated senior staff monitor sanctions, complaints, accidents and identify trends to ensure boarders are cared for and safe.

## **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):

- ensure the bathrooms and shower are kept clean (NMS 40.3)
- ensure that the rooms are regularly checked for health and safety issues, for example, trailing flexes (NMS 47.2)
- review the surface temperatures of the radiators (NMS 40.2)
- ensure there is a training record for staff (NMS 34)
- ensure that the fittings and equipment is maintained to an adequate standard (NMS 40.6)
- ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to supervise pupils in the pool (NMS 30.3)