

St Joseph`s College

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

St. Joseph's College is an independent, co-educational school located in a residential area approximately two miles from Ipswich town centre. The school was originally set up for boys in 1937 as a Catholic foundation by the Brothers of the De La Salle order. An amalgamation took place with a local Catholic girls' school in 1995. Today, St. Joseph's is a Christian school maintaining the traditions of its Lasallian foundation and is part of the international La Sallian network of schools. Education is provided for pupils between the ages of three and 18 years and boarding is currently offered between the ages of 10 and 18 years. There are approximately 505 day pupils and 106 boarders, 80 of whom are boarders from overseas. Boarding accommodation comprises of two boarding houses, Goldrood House and The Mews. Boarders' sleeping arrangements range from single rooms to small dormitories. There is good 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 pastoral support. Their views are sought and are listened to. Staff have access to appropriate guidance and training opportunities 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. Positive behaviour is promoted and the use of major punishments is rare. The health needs of boarders are responded to well and there is good support from the school's nurse and medical officer. Boarders are informed of matters affecting them and the advice of professional consultants is sought to support the school in providing a safe environment. However, some records do not reflect the school's actions taken in response. Recommendations have been raised in relation to this. Boarding accommodation caters appropriately for the school's age range. Refurbishment of Goldrood House is currently taking place and work is being carried out in stages. The 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 maintain a system of stock control for medication stored in the boarding houses and to ensure that staff signed medication records. The school was also asked to ensure that two written references are held on staff files and to provide warning notices advising pupils of hot water. These matters have been attended to. The actions taken in response to these recommendations support the safeguarding of children's welfare.

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 registered nurse is in attendance each day Monday to Friday and is contactable outside these times. Personal, social and health education primarily takes place within the

teaching environment of the school. Additional support is available from the school nurse and school doctor. Boarders have access to both male and female doctors and can choose whether or not they are accompanied by school staff during consultations. The school holds a medical history of each pupil and parental consent to medical treatment is obtained prior to admission. Boarders have access to medical, optical and dental services as required. The school nurse is able to maintain her nursing registration and update her knowledge through attendance at seminars, training events and meetings. Recent examples of study areas include asthma, countering bullying and healthy eating. First aid and epipen training is provided to all groups of staff and regular updates are staged. Records are maintained of all accidents, treatment and significant illnesses. Individual records are kept in relation to the management of pupil health and welfare matters. All records are securely stored. Systems are in place for the safe storage and administering of medication, including those held by pupils. The school provides boarders with a balanced, healthy diet, and good opportunities for exercise and relaxation. Special diets and a range of cultural backgrounds are catered for. Boarders also have access to fresh fruit and snacks in boarding houses. Meal times are well organised and there is sufficient time for boarders to finish their meals properly. Menu suggestions from boarders are communicated through the school and house council meetings. Some boarders think that some menus could be improved whilst a higher number refer positively to favourite dishes and the choice of hot and cold food. There are no outstanding recommendations from the environmental health service and all catering staff receive appropriate training for their role. Refurbishment of the school's kitchen and dining room has recently taken place to support the safe preparation and provision of meals. Food handling training and nutrition talks are staged for boarders and house staff at the beginning of each school year to support boarders' health and wellbeing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The welfare of boarders is taken seriously and is safeguarded. Details of the school's countering bullying policy is provided to all pupils and parents and boarders are aware 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 name a wide range of adults within the school whom they would go to with any problems. House staff, tutors, the school's Chaplain and school nurse are viewed as particular sources of support by boarders. Guidance and procedures are in place for all staff to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. All staff receive a child protection briefing upon joining the school and at regular intervals thereafter. Staff are aware of their responsibilities towards the pupils in their care both on and off site. Systems are in place for staff to raise specific concerns in relation to individual children. Senior staff holding responsibility for child protection policy and liaison attend Local Safeguarding Children Board training and access refresher training as appropriate. Prefects receive guidance in relation to child protection matters and the passing on of concerns to staff. Positive behaviour is promoted and standards of behaviour are high. Few sanctions are administered and discipline across the boarding houses is considered fair by boarders. Many boarders refer to the giving of warnings and staff initially discussing issues with them. Details of the school's rewards and sanctions policy are provided to staff, boarders and parents. The limited disciplinary role of prefects is clear and a high number of boarders view prefects as being supportive. Fire evacuation drills take place regularly. Staff and boarders are familiar with evacuation procedures and confirm that fire drills take place at different times. However, records do not record the time at which drills take place. Boarders also receive fire safety briefings as part of their induction to cooking in the boarding house. A fire action plan of the school and boarding provision is in place and there is physical evidence

that work is progressing in response to this. There is no written record of the work completed. Fire fighting equipment is regularly serviced and tested together with emergency lighting and fire alarm systems. Professional advice is sought regarding safety issues. Clear expectations are placed on pupils to sign in and out of boarding accommodation. Boarders' privacy is protected from unnecessary intrusion. House staff are clear on the privacy needs of young people and boarders confirm that staff knock on doors and wait for a reply before entering. Staff make themselves available in boarding accommodation without intruding inappropriately at sensitive times. Robust procedures are in place for the recruitment of staff. Records sampled evidenced the use of these procedures to check the suitability of newly appointed staff. The terms of staff accommodation is discussed at interview and detailed in contracts of employment. Steps are taken by the school to verify that taxi drivers used by the school have been appropriately checked. The school has recently completed enhanced criminal record checks of all staff employed before 2002. A record is maintained of visitors to the school and proof of identification is requested where appropriate. Outside visitors to the boarding areas are appropriately supervised to safeguard boarders' welfare. Wherever possible, maintenance staff carry out work in the boarding houses during school hours or when pupils 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. Security matters are taken seriously by the school and reasonable measures are taken to deter unauthorised access to school grounds. Barriers and bollards limit vehicle access and coded security door pads, security lighting and CCTV are also in place. The public use of the school's sports hall does not establish substantial unsupervised access to pupils. Usage by local groups is formally monitored by the school caretakers. Staff are aware of what to do should they encounter a stranger on site and regular reminders are given to pupils. Each of these measures contribute to the safety of pupils. Health and safety policies are in place and boarders confirm that they are made aware of health and safety matters affecting them; such matters include out of bounds areas and the use of fitness equipment. The school has adopted a county council's health and safety package which includes a number of safety policies and subsequent updates. However, some of the documents do not fully reflect the day to day life of the school. Safety glass has been fitted and window restrictors installed where a significant risk has been identified. Risk assessments are in place for boarding accommodation, activities both on and off site and aspects of the school premises and grounds.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Boarders are provided with a good level of pastoral care across the school community. Personal support is available for boarders from a wide range of staff, including tutors, house staff, the school nurse and the school's Chaplain. Significant changes in boarders' personal circumstances such as family illness and bereavement are dealt with sensitively. Such information is passed only to relevant staff in order that boarders can be suitably supported both in school and in their boarding house. Form tutors have a key role in monitoring pupils' progress, their integration into school and their overall happiness. However, pupils are encouraged to take problems and worries to a member of staff of their choosing. The school's independent listener is also available to boarders. There are sound relationships between staff and boarders. The boarding houses have a family atmosphere which is maintained by a dedicated and committed staff team. Interactions between staff and boarders were seen to be genuinely caring, warm and supportive. The school positively promotes the integration of all pupils and systems are in place to support and assist pupils who have learning or cultural needs. Staff are provided with guidance in working with international pupils to raise awareness of cultural differences and the difficulties

facing overseas' pupils. The school's Overseas Development Officer is fluent in a number of languages and plays a key role in supporting boarders and communicating with parents. Staff ensure a good choice of activities for boys and girls.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of the boarding provision. Formal and informal opportunities are available. These include talking to staff, house meetings, school council and boarding committee meetings and the use of suggestion boxes. Changes made as a result of listening to boarders include the timing of weekend meals, changes to menus, an increased number of activities available outside school hours and increased academic duties in boarding houses to help boarders with homework. Boarders report that council and boarding committee meetings work in practice and that feedback is received regarding suggestions and ideas put forward. Boarders are able to maintain private contact with their families and friends. Payphones are available for boarders' private use although the majority tend to use their mobile phones. Office telephones are also made available when necessary. Appropriate helpline and outside contact numbers are displayed on notice boards. However, the contact details for Ofsted need updating in some areas. Many boarders use email as a means of keeping in touch. Appropriate safeguards are in place to protect boarders when they are using the internet. Parents are welcome to visit their child at school and staff contact parents regarding their child's progress and any concerns. Where necessary, communication support is available when communicating with parents of international pupils. The Principal and the Overseas Development Officer visit Hong Kong at least once a year and invite parents and families to meet with them to discuss their child's progress. New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in. A comprehensive three day programme of induction is staged for new boarders which includes written information, presentations and buddy arrangements with more experienced boarders. Boarders are positive in their comments about the induction programme as they feel it allows them time to settle in and to integrate with fellow boarders.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Boarders' possessions and money are protected. Secure, lockable storage is provided to each boarder for personal possessions and valuables. A pocket money system, with appropriate records, is in place for younger boarders. The opening of bank accounts is supported for older boarders. Boarders are provided with a good standard of accommodation in The Mews and in the refurbished areas of Goldrood House. There is a rolling programme of upgrading and extending the boarding provision. Refurbishment of Goldrood House is currently taking place and work is being completed in stages. Formerly used as a teaching area with a small boarding provision, the accommodation is being fully converted to a boarding house. One half of the house is completed and work is progressing on the other. The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings during short holiday periods is safeguarded and promoted. Robust procedures are in place for the checking of host families and the accommodation they provide prior to placements being made. A signed, formal agreement is obtained and written guidance is provided by the school to support the pastoral care of the pupil concerned. Staff discuss lodging arrangements separately with each pupil on a regular basis and undertake follow up visits. Host families are invited to attend school events, some of which are hosted by boarders.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school has a clear vision of the purpose and benefits of boarding. There is good leadership and a commitment to continuing to improve the boarding provision. Details of the school's boarding principles and practice and relevant policies are made available to appropriate parties. A comprehensive handbook is provided to parents and boarders and is regularly updated. The organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare. House staff are experienced and clear in their roles and demonstrate good knowledge of the young people in their care. Boarders are appropriately separated by age and gender with no major discrepancies being reported in the quality of boarding practice for boys and girls. A small number of boarders highlight some differences in physical provision within Goldrood House but also acknowledge the work completed so far and the further work planned. The Principal and designated members of the senior management team have regular oversight of the school's records regarding discipline, complaints, accidents and risk assessments and identify any issues requiring action. Boarders are adequately supervised by staff. 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. There is a high ratio of resident staff who can be called upon for support by duty staff in an emergency. 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 locate a member of staff when they need to. Additional staff are employed at weekends to increase boarders' access to sporting activities, school fitness rooms and external events. All staff with boarding duties are provided with up to date written guidance on the school's boarding policies and practice. Training opportunities are provided and made available to staff, including child protection, first aid and other pastoral care matters. Regular meetings take place involving boarding staff to discuss boarding practice and the pastoral care of pupils. Systems are in place for the annual appraisal of staff, and the supervision of ancillary staff. 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):

- record the time at which fire drills take place in the boarding houses (NMS 26.3)
- maintain a record of work completed in relation to fire risk assessments (NMS 26.1)
- ensure all health and safety policies reflect the day to day life of the school (NMS 47.6)
- update the contact details of Ofsted provided on boarders' notice boards (NMS 19.6).

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.