

# Old Swinford Hospital School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	22 March 2006

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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**

Old Swinford Hospital School is a voluntary aided boarding school for boys aged 11 - 16 and for both boys and girls in the sixth form. The school is unique in that it educates pupils both from the local area, from further afield in the UK and from abroad. Many join the school at times other than year 7. Although the background of most is relatively advantaged, others are admitted and supported by charitable foundations to attend the school. Although the school admits 16 pupils in each year on the basis of academic ability, pupils representing the full range of ability are present. While most pupils are from a White British background, there are small minorities from other ethnic heritages.

### **Summary**

This was an key announced Ofsted inspection undertaken over three days by three inspectors. The inspection looked at the key Boarding School National Minimum Standards (NMS).

Old Swinford Hospital provides a strong service with outstanding features. Outcomes under being healthy, staying safe and economic well-being are good and outcomes under organisation, positive contribution and enjoying and achieving are of an exceptionally high quality.

Old Swinford Hospital is meeting its stated objective to promote and maintain a healthy and safe environment that allows boarders to develop a tolerance of others, a sense of personal and corporate responsibility and an ability to cope in a wide variety of social circumstances.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were no recommendations made at the last inspection. The school's management team continue to quality assure practice and procedures, and develop the service provided by Old Swinford Hospital.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The school has a broad range of policies in place that demonstrate the school's ethos and commitment in terms of meeting student's holistic health needs. Parents and guardians are expected to take responsibility for the health of their child. They are encouraged to work in partnership with the school in maintaining good standards of health and well-being. Staff are effective in meeting the needs of boarders in relation to their health. Staff consistently promote healthy lifestyle choices in daily routines, exercise and activities.

The school has in place a clear policy that addresses Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE), which helps boarders to embrace change, feel positive about who they are and enjoy healthy, safe, responsible and fulfilled lives. The school has in place concise policies about alcohol, smoking and drug misuse. For example, boarders are provided with basic facts about alcohol and the effects of teenage drinking. Strong links are in place with external agencies to inform boarders about drug and alcohol misuse. The school timetables challenging initiatives across the curriculum to reinforce these key messages to boarders.

The school has in place a number of policies that support medical treatment of boarders. Boarders have full access to a medical centre on site, which refers boarders to professional services as appropriate. The medical centre is staffed by two qualified nurses and a clerical assistant and the provision provides 24-hour cover. Boarders can access regular surgeries, which are held each morning and evening. Boarders commented that they receive good care if they are unwell. There is also a visiting School Medical Officer who attends the school twice a week. All boarders are encouraged to register with the local GP practice and have full access to male or female doctors. Boarders regularly attend the local dentist and opticians, which is in agreement with parents or guardians. They can be accompanied by the clerical assistant or the house matron to the necessary appointments during the daytime. Old Swinford Hospital also provides access to a counsellor. This offers boarders the opportunity to explore their feelings about their lives so that they can reflect and understand themselves from a different perspective.

There are effective arrangements in place for the management of first-aid and this ensures that boarders receive appropriate treatment. The staff in the boarding houses are able to provide simple first aid. For example, cleaning and dressing grazes. The nursing staff are on-call to the boarding houses for any unexpected emergency. Similarly, the nursing staff provide first aid support for sporting fixtures at the school and for away events. All accidents, injuries and illness are fully recorded and form part of the boarders records maintained at the medical centre.

Parents and guardians are expected to complete a health questionnaire about their child's health history, which also includes any current health needs. This then forms the basis of the school's health records for the boarder. The nursing staff ensure that appropriate consents are in place for medical treatment and first aid.

The school has in place suitable arrangements for administering medications. The nursing team maintain good records and a clear paper audit trail is available on all medications available on the school site. The nursing staff manage, very effectively, specific medical conditions and provide the necessary training. For example, the treatment and management of Anaphylactic shock where staff are educated about the condition with respect to trigger avoidance and the correct use of the EpiPen auto-injector kits. Generally, nursing staff administer medications during the school day and there are good arrangements in place for the boarding house staff to administer regular medications taken by boarders. For boarders who self-administer medication the nursing staff assess that they are sufficiently responsible to do so. However, there was no documentary evidence to support this. The nursing team recognised this gap and intend to rectify this area by reviewing the policy and by implementing a risk assessment approach.

The school provides a large professional catering team who prepare and cook the school meals for boarders. The school management ensures that boarders' views on the quality and the provision of food are openly discussed. Boarders regularly attend the 'Food Committee' to help develop and contribute to the school's desire to continually improve the catering provision. Students were also involved in the recent appointment of a new catering company now working with the school.

Boarders are provided with healthy nutritious meals through well balanced, varied menus. A wide diversity in dishes are offered with cultural variations especially Chinese, Mexican and Indian. Boarders are encouraged to try new dishes, to ensure they receive nutritious and wholesome food. Mealtimes are made a social occasion and boarders eat in the dining room.

Boarders can prepare light food snacks in the boarding houses. Boarders are aware of food hygiene and keep the kitchen area clean and tidy; all equipment is in good working order.

Through the school curriculum, boarders are encouraged to learn and understand the importance of a healthy balanced diet. Boarders develop a clear understanding of the components of a balanced diet and also understand the importance of regular exercise. Boarders have acquired and applied the knowledge about exercise, health and relaxation. Boarders are encouraged to evaluate their own eating and exercise habits.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders' safety and protection is effectively promoted by school staff because they understand what their role and responsibilities are in terms of good safeguarding practices. Staff are aware of the correct procedures to follow when they need to report any allegations or child protection concerns. The school's records demonstrate that the child protection coordinator works in partnership with other agencies and professionals to promote the welfare and protection of boarders. Where child protection concerns have occurred the school actively engages with outside agencies to achieve the best possible arrangements that protect boarders.

Many boarders make very positive statements about how the school keeps them safe for example, 'Old Swinford Hospital is a place where you feel safe at all times'. House staff have effective systems in place to monitor the whereabouts of boarders and although the boarding houses have different systems in place they are tailored to ensure student safety. Boarders recognise that these arrangements are in place to keep them safe and comments include: 'the use of register and signing in and out means teachers know where you are. Also, teachers and staff always check-up on you which is always comforting.'

The school has a range of important policies and staff guidance that relate to the operation of the school and the promotion boarder safety and welfare. This information is available and promoted to boarders, parents and staff in a number of ways from online access to specific handbooks. This arrangement achieves an open and transparent window on how the school is expected to operate and be accountable for the safety and protection of all its students.

Staff practice is further strengthened by training in a number of areas that relate to safeguarding and protection. The school provides guidance and briefing sessions to staff as well as accessing external training. For instance, gap students receive formal training about how to support student safety and more senior staff complete advanced child protection training. The school has a good focus on ensuring that the training provided is consistent with an individual's role and responsibilities in the school.

Boarders' confidentiality is respected because staff ensure that sensitive information about them is kept safe. In addition, staff do not talk about boarders in a way that compromises their privacy or circumstances and staff communicate and talk with them with respect and consideration.

Boarders are confident about the school's ability to resolve their concerns or complaints. Many state that they can talk to staff of their choosing if they have a concern. They are listened to and are able to resolve matters to their satisfaction. The school advertises its complaints policy and processes widely so the complaints procedure is accessible to aid those wishing to use it.

The management of health and safety processes is good, which helps to protect boarders from the risk of harm or injury. The school has established systems and procedures in place to ensure that the health and safety of boarders is monitored and promoted. For example, fire prevention systems are checked and serviced regularly, well rehearsed emergency evacuation procedures are carried out and risk assessments are completed to inform the school about environmental safety issues. The school has considered very closely the health and safety issues that relate to the on-site building works currently taking place. A conscientious and responsible approach has been taken to the management of the new build and the daily operation of the school. Boarders are benefiting from this approach because as far as possible risks and disruption are minimised.

Boarders are viewed in a positive light by staff, they are supported and encouraged to behave well and success in many areas of school life is praised, celebrated and congratulated. Overall, boarders speak very positively about their experiences and the encouraging feedback and rewards they receive from staff. Boarders can earn rewards for their boarding house through the allocation of points or more specific and individualised rewards like meals out. Boarders are encouraged and supported to look at the consequences of poor behaviour. Staff speak to boarders about their behaviour and sometimes use more formal sanctions that are relevant to each individual and the circumstances that have occurred. Most boarders state that staff are fair and view potential sanctions as a deterrent rather than a punishment. The school keeps records of sanctions used to enable managers to review the wider school's responses to the management of behaviour. Recent scrutiny of the school's operation in this area was fed into the annual full review of the school's disciplinary policy by the Board of Governors. The review included consultation and involvement with the school council who were able to contribute and influence the review process and final policy. The review process is a very positive example of how the school promotes an inclusive approach to the day-to-day operation and development of the school.

Boarder relationships and interactions are closely monitored and supervised. Most incidents of bullying or unwanted behaviour are challenged. Victims are supported and those boarders whose conduct is unacceptable are provided with guidance about expected standards of behaviour. The school has promoted a number of initiatives to raise everyone's awareness about challenging and managing bullying behaviour in the school. This includes an anti-bullying committee to help steer the school in the direction of areas that are important to students. The committee demonstrates an insightful and clear understating about some of the issues facing the school in terms of its future approach and responses to bullying. Many views expressed in the committee are known by the wider school population, for instance staff interventions are not always consistent and some boarders are unsure of what they can expect from staff in terms of their interventions.

Further areas of the school's operation also support student's safety and welfare. For instance, the operation of the prefect system promotes this role well because clear guidance, support and supervision from teachers, housemasters and house staff is provided. Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact within the school from adults who have not been subject to the school's vetting checks and there is a good awareness of the need to monitor all visitors to the boarding houses. Boarders feel safe and secure in their boarding accommodation.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school has the capacity to develop and cultivate boarders' personal development, which includes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Boarders receive excellent individual support. Old Swinford Hospital places a strong emphasis on pastoral and academic tutoring, which provides a substantial platform for boarders to achieve and develop a strong sense of identity. Boarders are confident and provided with opportunities to fulfil their potential. Boarders clearly identify a number of staff who they can approach if they need help or support. This includes both teaching and boarding staff. Boarders are benefiting from living in a school where staff are focused on their success, needs and achievements. Boarders are treated with equal concern whilst recognising their differences. Boarder's religion, culture and identity are given strong prominence with staff acknowledging and promoting these needs with equal importance. All possible steps are taken to promote social inclusion and involvement in the life of the school.

Boarders each have a team of boarding staff, lead by a housemaster that includes both house based and education tutors, gap students and matrons. They effectively oversee and co-ordinate individual boarders care and education. The Housemaster and their spouse play a key role, guiding the spiritual and moral development of each boarder whilst promoting strength, confidence and respect for others.

Worship at Old Swinford Hospital draws on ancient and modern traditions, and broadly but flexibly reflects the school's Anglican Church of England origins. Worship is led by the School Chaplain, by other members of staff, and by visiting clergy of other denominations. The participation of boarders is actively encouraged and weekend services of worship are often held in the parish church with the congregation of St Mary's Old Swinford.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Boarders benefit from being in a school where teachers and staff are committed to meeting the diverse needs of each individual. Staff are well informed about boarders' needs in relation to their identity and backgrounds and are fully aware of how to help and support them in a fair and non-judgemental way.

Social opportunities and activities are outstanding. Boarders are able to develop interests in a wide range of group and individual sports and activities with staff guidance. The well-established programme of social events and activities provides boarders with opportunities that encourages them to achieve educationally and socially to their fullest potential. Extra curricular activities include sport, Duke of Edinburgh, Combined Cadet Force, societies, music, art, theatre, outdoor pursuits and weekend trips. There is an extensive fixture list for sport and a music calendar with guest performers open to all boarders. Boarders are also able to be members of the chamber orchestra, choir, concert band and swing band. Across the school site there is a range of outstanding indoor and outdoor recreation facilities for the use of boarders.

Boarders are clear that this outcome judgement is outstanding at Old Swinford Hospital.

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

The provision is outstanding.



Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute to the running of the school because their views and opinions are valued, which results in social cohesion and strong school and house identity.

Boarders consider that they benefit from a supportive structure that consults them on matters concerning their own lives, progress and future. The school also proactively gains boarders views and involves them in matters affecting the operation of the boarding houses and the school. Each house has regular house meetings, there is an effective school council and there are a range of committees that address issues such as weekend activities, the dining room, anti bullying, uniform and recycling and the environment. These forums help boarders develop loyalty and feel proud to be part of a boarding house and community of the school. The board of governors and feoffees are also proactive in gaining boarders views on a regular basis. For example, each feoffee and governor is linked to a boarding house and once a year the school's disciplinary policy and record is reviewed in partnership with the student council and the board of governors.

The school demonstrates a very positive attitude to boarders' families and parental contact. There are established policies and procedures that are known to staff and followed in practice. The board of governors has three parent elected parent governors and there are parent representatives on the feoffee. The school have annual contact with overseas parents in Hong Kong and are due to undertake their first organised contact in Germany next year. There is a active parent association who raise money and organise social activities. The Old Foleys Association is an association of former members of the school who organise a programme of activities, facilitate communication between members and support many school activities, both practically and financially. A parents forum was established last year and meet the Headmaster twice a term to discuss and address topical issues and feed into the development of key documents such as the school rules and parent's guide.

New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle by an established induction processes. All year 6 boarders are invited to a well received and organised taster weekend. Then at the start of term all new boarders and their parents join an induction morning, which introduces them to key staff and enables them to take part in tours of the school and boarding houses. Sixth formers are recruited to help with induction and a range of handbooks provide additional information and support.

All year 7 boarders move into prospect house and during the year they prepare boarders to move to senior houses. All boarders in prospect house know which senior house they will eventually be moving into and are normally placed in dormitories in prospect house that correspond with the senior house they will be moving to. They also contribute to the inter house trophy in every respect as members of their senior houses. This helps promote a smooth transition between the junior and senior houses.

Boarders are clear that this outcome judgement is outstanding at Old Swinford Hospital.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The school provides a safe living and working environment for boarders and staff.

The school has one junior boarding house and six senior boarding houses, with a seventh purpose built senior house opening in September 2009. There is also a day house for non

resident sixth form students. Foley House and Maybury House have undergone major refurbishment as part of a rolling programme, whilst other houses range in standards of facilities and decor. A change in the development strategy to ensure all boarding houses are refurbished was introduced in 2008, which enables partial refurbishment work to be carried out in more boarding houses each year. Each housemaster has a long term development plan for their respective house which feeds into the school's five year plan to improve boarding facilities. Each year the housemaster will evaluate the plan and priorities projects for the coming year. The school is currently continuing to follow its commitment to ensure all boarding houses are developed to a good standard. This work demonstrates the commitment by Old Swinford Hospital School to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of boarders and staff living on site.

The accommodation provided for boarders is suitable, well heated and lit. Boarders can choose to decorate their bedrooms and many are personalised, which helps boarders take pride in their surroundings as well as helping them to develop ownership of the environment. There are an appropriate number of washing facilities.

The school provides each boarder with a lockable secure place where they can keep their possessions. There are very effective systems for recording pocket money held on behalf of boarders.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Old Swinford Hospital has a Statement of Boarding Practice and Principles, which is clear and informative. Written documentation for staff, boarders and parents gives detailed information to staff, young people and their families on the services available, policies and procedures. This includes the philosophy of care and the expectations of the school. The school is proactive in reviewing all information relating to the service and involves staff, boarders and parents in the reviewing processes.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The environment represents the individual and diverse identities of boarders and this uniqueness is celebrated in a way that promotes awareness and understanding. Boarders enriched care and educational experience is underpinned by the school's coherent philosophy, values and strong management team. A high level of investment is given to the development and training of its staff whose deployment and performance are effective. Boarders are kept safe and provided with proactive care as they have sufficient numbers of staff to look after them. Boarders are making progress because staffing in the school is well organised and informed, and very effectively managed. There are clear, well established lines of communication and effective meeting structures.

Old Swinford Hospital has substantial strengths and a sustained record of monitoring and evaluating performance and managing improvement. The management team are ambitious for further improvement and where areas for development emerge, the school recognises and manages them well. The senior management team provide effective monitoring and evaluation of relevant records and events such as the complaints, child protection and discipline logs. They also audit each boarding house on annual basis against the Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards.

Staff and boarders at all levels are given numerous opportunities in forums such as meetings, personal development days, boarding development away days, committees, working parties

and individual assessments, to help with the school's organisation and development. The depth and detail of consulting and planning is demonstrated in the work currently being undertaken by the school to expand boarding in September 2009.

This consultation and regular communication ensures proper scrutiny and advancement of all aspects of the boarders' care. Any shortfalls in these areas are identified and addressed very quickly. This quality monitoring and other similar initiatives contribute to reports to the governing body, feoffees and the school's overall strategic plan and implementation.

## **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 boarders administering their own medication are assessed as competent to do so and documented evidence is available to demonstrate this NMS 15.11
- ensure the anti bullying policy is reviewed to include E bullying and is effective in practice. NMS 2.1