

# Shaftesbury School & Sports College

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	19 June 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**

Shaftesbury School & Sports College is a voluntary controlled co-educational school catering for approximately 1000 students aged 11 - 18 years. The school, which is situated in the country town of Shaftesbury, is a specialist sports college and is the only maintained school in Dorset offering boarding education. At the time of the inspection the school had 65 boarders. The boarders are accommodated at Barton Hill House which is situated a short walk from the main school site. Accommodation consists of a converted Victorian house adjoined by two purpose built single gender accommodation blocks. The school states that its mission is to empower every individual who participates in its community to realise his/her aspirations. The aim of the boarding house is to provide a structured, purposeful, differentiated and happy residential environment designed to encourage young people to thrive and prosper.

### **Summary**

Shaftesbury School & Sports College operates to a very good standard with some outstanding areas in its provision to boarders. This inspection was carried out as part of the normal inspection process on an announced basis. The aim of the inspection was to review the 21 key standards for boarding schools. As part of the inspection process questionnaires were sent to parents and students who board at the school to gain their views. Responses received were, in the main, complimentary and indicated a good level of satisfaction with the pastoral care provided. There is appropriate healthcare provision available to students, with a good emphasis on health promotion. Comprehensive policies and procedures support and promote good practice across the school which ensures students are kept safe and their welfare is suitably protected. Boarders benefit from excellent levels of individual support from staff and the school clearly demonstrates its commitment to anti-discriminatory practice by valuing and embracing diversity. There are established forums, both formal and informal, for boarders to contribute their views to the boarding practice. Staff are encouraged and supported to undertake training opportunities and have their performances reviewed on a regular basis. There is very strong leadership in the school which oversees and monitors all aspects of the care provided. The standard of accommodation for some of the boarders requires major refurbishment. However, a budget has been allocated to upgrade specific areas of the accommodation through a staged refurbishment plan.

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 three recommendations made at the last inspection carried out in June 2006. Areas highlighted for improvement related to the accommodation; two of these have been satisfactorily addressed. The school has allocated significant resources in order to raise the standard of the accommodation in the boarding house thereby demonstrating their commitment to providing high quality care for its boarders. Shower pods have been replaced in the girls' showers and some of the shower areas in the boys' house have been refitted. With regard to the third recommendation a budget has been allocated to enable a staged refurbishment of the boys' accommodation, located in the 'Towers', to take place.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The school delivers a comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. The programme includes information about a range of health issues including sex education, keeping safe and substance and alcohol misuse. External agencies are used to support the programme as appropriate. Diversity and cultural issues are also linked into the programme to ensure equality is promoted to all students. Suitable procedures underpin practice throughout the school to ensure boarders' safety and health is maintained. Boarders benefit from good healthcare provision. Boarders are registered at a local medical centre and are supported to access health care as necessary. A matron and designated staff oversee and administer medication as appropriate. Boarders comment that they are supported if unwell. Boarders' health is protected and promoted by the safe storage and administration of medication. Appropriate records and procedures are in place for this purpose. Medical consents from parents and staff, suitably trained in first aid, in the boarding house ensure that emergency treatment can be provided if necessary. Any specific health needs are managed effectively and the matron has access to a nursing adviser for additional support when necessary. Suitable records are maintained of any accidents and effective monitoring systems are in place to ensure appropriate action is taken where necessary.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders are effectively protected through the school's positive approach to dealing with bullying. A comprehensive policy is followed in practice and any form of bullying is taken seriously and responsive action taken immediately. The school is proactive in raising awareness of bullying issues through its PSHE programme. Boarders report very low levels of bullying incidents within the school. Boarders' welfare is protected through clear and robust child protection policies and procedures which are generally consistent with the local Safeguarding Children Procedures. However, whilst all staff spoken to were fully aware of the correct procedures to follow, the procedures do not currently include the requirement for any referral to be made within 24 hours. All staff have received child protection training and have a clear understanding about their responsibilities in respect of keeping boarders safe. However, for some boarding staff this training took place approximately two years ago. Boarders confirmed that they felt properly protected from harm by staff at the school. Boarders consider the rules and any consequences are fair and benefit from a clearly defined disciplinary policy that is fairly applied. A student agreement is signed up to by boarders, parents and the school where the expectations of boarders and their behaviour are clearly stated. Records of significant sanctions are maintained appropriately and no unduly excessive sanctions are applied. The general standard of behaviour in the boarding house is good. Parents commented that the boarding house provides the same balance of discipline and fairness that is expected at home. Boarders' welfare is protected through a satisfactory complaints procedure. There is an understanding within the school that any concern or complaint will be taken seriously and resolved, either formally or informally. Boarders confirm they know how to raise a concern and that they would be listened to and the issue dealt with appropriately and promptly. Documentation includes the contact details for Ofsted and how to access the Children's Rights Director; an addition that exceeds the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools. There have been no recent formal complaints. Boarders are protected from the risk of fire by effective fire safety precautions and appropriately trained staff. Regular fire evacuations take place and all fire safety equipment

is checked and serviced in line with the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service, with detailed records maintained. There are no outstanding recommendations from the Fire and Rescue service. Boarders demonstrate a very good understanding of the school's evacuation procedures and commented that they feel safe in the boarding house. Boarders' privacy is respected by non-intrusive staff who are sensitive when entering bathrooms or bedrooms. All bathrooms, toilets and showers have appropriate locks and are private. All boarders have a lockable place in which they can store personal possessions. Boarders have their own mobile telephones should they need to make or receive a private call. They also have access to landline telephones in the boarding house. Boarders' welfare is protected by robust staff recruitment process. The school follows a very clear policy on recruitment in line with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance. A record of the selection process undertaken ensures appropriate checks are in place prior to new staff commencing work. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks at enhanced level are undertaken on all staff employed at the school, who may have unsupervised contact with the students, prior to appointment. The boarding house maintains a list of taxi drivers who have been CRB checked. Boarders' welfare is protected and safeguarded through appropriate security measures. Boarding accommodation is reserved solely for the use of those boarders designated to it. All boarding areas are suitably protected by the use of window restrictors, door key pads and locks. Closed circuit television is strategically placed and external doors are linked into the intruder alarm. All visitors to the school have to sign in and wear badges in order to identify themselves. Boarders are safeguarded by an appropriate health and safety policy, suitable risk assessments and well trained staff. Maintenance issues are prioritised and staff work effectively to ensure boarders are protected from unavoidable hazards. Boarders are protected by effective checking of electrical appliances and gas installations, water checking and safe storage of all substances hazardous to health. Boarders' welfare is promoted through a variety of risk assessments relating to activities, the boarding house and any other known risks.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders benefit from excellent levels of individual support provided by pastoral and academic staff. Tutors, staff mentors, boarding house staff and independent listeners play an important role in the wellbeing of the boarders. In addition there are other staff readily available to provide support and encouragement. These include within the Raising Achievement Department, numerous staff readily available to encourage and support boarders to flourish and fulfil their individual potential, regardless of ability. Boarders are clear about which members of staff they can go to for personal support. Boarders also enjoy the support they receive from being part of a small boarding house which promotes a strong sense of family across the age range of the boarders. Boarders' lives are enhanced through the school's commitment to equal opportunities and the reciprocal, caring ethos experienced by them. The school positively welcomes and celebrates the diversity of its boarders. Excellent arrangements are made for boarders for whom English is not their first language. All staff support and promote the integration of the international students. Arrangements are made for boarders to attend churches of their own choice if required. Religious festivals are celebrated and boarders are supported to observe the requirements of their own faith if requested.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders benefit from having a variety of opportunities to contribute their views and opinions to the operation of the boarding provision. These include the student council, 'Talkback' box, boarders' surveys, staff mentoring and the 'open door' policy to access house staff. Many changes have been made as a result of these forums and these include changes to breakfast times, seating arrangements at mealtimes, arrangements for prep and improved computer provision. Boarders benefit from additional extracurricular activities, such as fund raising activities, the Christmas service and the Battle of the Bands, the winners of which appeared at a local music festival. Whilst a minority of boarders questioned the effectiveness of the student council this could be resolved by ensuring minutes from the meetings are posted in the boarding house which identify any agreed decisions. Boarders' welfare is enhanced and maintained through positive contact with their parents, families and friends. They have their own email addresses and can use the boarding house landlines in addition to their personal mobile telephones. There is close contact between the boarding house staff, tutors and senior management to ensure parents are kept up to date with progress or any worries that may arise.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

The school provides a standard of accommodation for some of its boarders that is barely satisfactory. Whilst there has been some refurbishment of the toilet and washing provision in both the girls' and boys' boarding areas, the 'Towers' dormitories and washing facilities have been neglected and present as stark, unwelcoming and institutional. Parents commented, via the questionnaire, that there needs to be some investment in aspects of the infrastructure of the boarding house buildings, particularly the boy's dormitories. The school acknowledges the deficiencies in the quality of the accommodation and a budget has been allocated to rectify the concerns, through a staged refurbishment plan. However, this has been an outstanding concern over several inspections.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The statement of boarding principles and practice is readily available to parents, boarders and staff and can be found in the prospectus and accompanying literature. This is currently in need of review to reflect changes in personnel in the boarding house. In addition the boarding house has its own handbook welcoming new boarders and setting out the expectations of life in the house. Boarders benefit from a very well run school. The monitoring of risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents is exemplary. Reasonable action is taken to reduce risks identified by risk assessments and when trends or patterns may emerge. Regular meetings take place between personnel on the Leadership Group to ensure consistency across all disciplines. The Head Teacher submits detailed reports to the Board of Governors who meet four times a year, in addition to the Boarding Governors who meet six times a year. Boarders' welfare is protected and promoted by adequate staffing levels, day and night, with relevant experience to meet their needs. Boarders confirm they always know who is on duty at any time and how to summon assistance should the need arise. There are good arrangements for managing and supervising staff. Boarders enjoy a high level of care provided by dedicated experienced staff. Staff meet regularly through various forums to ensure consistency for boarders. Staff receive induction and are encouraged and supported to access further professional development opportunities. Each member of staff receives a regular appraisal. Boarders commented very favourably on the staff at the school and how well they are cared for.

## 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):

- include in the child protection policy and procedures the requirement that any referral of allegations, or suspicion of abuse, must be made within 24 hours to the local social services department. (NMS 3.2)
- provide regular refresher training on responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse and the action to be taken in response to this. (NMS 3.5)
- provide written minutes of student council meetings which identify any agreed decisions. (NMS 12)
- ensure that the accommodation, toilet and washing facilities within the 'Towers' are refurbished and maintained to a satisfactory standard. (NMS 42/44)
- review the boarding prospectus to reflect current boarding practice at the school. (NMS 1.4)



## 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.**