

Wynstones

Inspection report for boarding school

Unique reference number	SC034618
Inspection date	27 June 2008
Inspector	Barbara Davies
Type of Inspection	Key

Address	Wynstones School Church Lane Whaddon GLOUCESTER GL4 0UF
Telephone number	01452 429220
Email	
Registered person	Ken Power
Head of care	Ken Power
Head / Principal	Ken Power
Date of last inspection	19 January 2005

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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

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

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Wynstones School is a registered charity founded in 1937. It is situated in a rural location but in close proximity to the City of Gloucester and town of Stroud. The school provides education from pre-school to age 18. It bases its philosophy on the work of the Educationalist, Rudolf Steiner and, in common with other Steiner Waldorf schools, is managed on republican principles. Therefore, a "College of Teachers" is responsible for the curriculum, staffing and pastoral needs of pupils. The school attracts pupils predominantly from the local area although a small number of pupils attend the school from other parts of the UK. The school is receptive to accepting pupils from overseas who are aged between 13 and 18 years of age. Overseas pupils usually attend for shorter periods (from six weeks up to one year). They are placed with boarding families for the duration of their stay and attend the Upper School on a day basis. They usually already have an association with other Steiner movements.

Summary

This was an announced key inspection of the school focussing solely on the welfare standards as outlined within the National Minimum standards for Boarding Schools. A separate Ofsted inspection of the education provision within the school was conducted in February 2007. The school only provides accommodation for a small percentage of the school's population and does not have boarding facilities within the school. Instead a number of families offer accommodation in their own homes. Only one pupil was placed with a boarding family when this inspection took place. Information obtained as pupils are admitted informs and enables the school to meet children's health needs. Some areas of the school's practice, such as child protection and responding to complaints, are rigorous and ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded. Significant shortfalls were, however, found in the recruitment procedures, including the failure to consistently secure two references and not always completing its own checks with the Criminal Records Bureau. Checks that had been completed by another organisation some time previously are sometimes relied upon. This means that out of date and incomplete information is being used to make an assessment about a person's suitability to work with children. This could potentially place children at risk. Health and safety are matters given a high priority within the school. Rigorous and robust written risk assessments are completed for most matters within the school. The risk assessments completed for trips away from the school are particularly comprehensive to make sure that pupils are protected. Some areas of the school, such as the pond, have not yet been subject to formal assessment. In their leisure time, boarding pupils benefit from being able to socialise with friends they have made at school and to use community resources. Whilst the school expects host families to support boarders in their education, host families do not always know what level of support is required. The school values the contribution that pupils make to the school and consults with them to obtain their views. Boarders staying with boarding families enjoy an excellent standard of accommodation.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Several of the school's key policies, such as anti-bullying and child protection, are now included in the 'Pupil and Parent' handbook. Copies of these are distributed to parents and pupils as

they start the school to inform them about the school's practice. Following the last welfare inspection of the school in January 2005, shortfalls were noted in the school's recruitment procedures for staff and host families. These have not yet been fully addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The school is well-informed about the health needs of Boarding Pupils and their health needs are well met. The school's enrolment form requires parents to provide extensive information about the health needs of their children. Information requested covers matters such as immunisations, allergies and medication requirements. Information is shared with home boarding families so they are well-informed about any interventions or treatment that may be necessary. Consents for medical treatment are obtained by the school so it can seek immediate medical intervention should the need arise. The routine health needs of long-term Home Boarding Pupils are met by registering them with medical practitioners in the area in which they are living. Those staying for short periods of time are treated as emergency patients. The school and host families seldom hold medication for boarders. It is the expectation that class teachers complete emergency training in first aid so that an immediate response can be provided to children if an emergency arises. In addition a number of personnel within the school are qualified as appointed persons. Following an education inspection of the school, by Ofsted in February 2007, improvements have been made to the school's system for recording accidents. The school maintains records that satisfy health and safety requirements with a chronological account being kept of accidents as they occur. These also indicate any taken to prevent a repetition of such events.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Parents and children receive written information as they commence the school. This advises them about the procedures the school will follow should concerns arise in relation to bullying, child protection and complaints. Information about the school's disciplinary procedures is also well-publicised. The information is available to staff within the staff handbook. Bullying is not identified as being an issue within the school and boarders mostly enjoy friendly and relaxed relationships with each other. The school's anti-bullying policy advocates a 'no-blame approach' to be taken in response to any incidents that occur, with tangible support being offered to all those involved. The school's knowledge of the pupils coupled with a positive and reasoning approach by staff, allows most conflicts to be resolved at an early stage. Boarders are aware that the school takes incidents of bullying seriously and that repeated incidents will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary code. Boarders are safeguarded by the school's arrangements for child protection. Two people within the school have specific responsibility for child protection matters and have attended training provided by the local authority. The school's designated officers raise the awareness of teachers, staff and host families by providing an induction into the school's child protection procedures on appointment. Whilst the procedures have not been updated to reflect the recent legislative changes to the Safeguarding Procedures, they clearly advise staff as to the action they should take if they suspect a child is at risk. The school liaises appropriately with Gloucestershire Safeguarding Board when they consider pupils may be at risk during the times they are not at school. No child protection concerns are reported as having arisen within the school since the previous welfare inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in February 2005. A written contract, signed by parents, boarders and the

school ensures that everyone is clear about the standards of behaviour expected and the role that everyone is expected to play to achieve this. The school promotes an ethos where children learn and show respect towards each other and this is evident in the way they conduct themselves in school. It also subscribes to an approach where staff are alert and responsive to breaches of the school's code allowing most issues to be dealt with at an early stage in the school's disciplinary procedures. Records show that sanctions are fairly and appropriately applied in the school. Some host families provide boarders with written information describing their 'house rules' and have found this to be an effective way of informing boarders about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Host families report few problems in managing the behaviour of boarders. Though rarely necessary, any breach of house rules is discussed with the host family co-ordinator and agreement reached as to any sanction or action that needs to be taken. Boarders say that their 'issues are dealt with fairly and people try to talk to you when there are problems'. Although not familiar with the concept of 'how to make a complaint', boarders know what to do if they are concerned about the way they are treated at school. Boarders were able to quote a number of people within the school who they can approach if there is a problem, including a tutor and host family co-ordinator. Boarders are satisfied with the approach taken by the school to resolve problems. Records are kept on boarders' files of any written concerns raised by parents and the response taken in response to these. The school's arrangements protect children in the event of a fire. A comprehensive fire risk assessment has been completed by an external agency and the recommendations implemented. Regular testing and maintenance of fire alarms and fire equipment takes place to make sure they remain in good working order and can be relied on in the event of a fire. Full evacuation of the premises takes place regularly so that children know what to do in the event of a fire. Problems encountered during evacuation are recorded and used to heighten everyone's awareness of the response expected. Host families, as part of their contract with the school, have smoke detectors installed in their homes and most operate a 'no smoking policy' as a precautionary measure against fire. The planning of trips and activities that take place away from the school includes a comprehensive and robust risk assessment process. An itinerary of the trip is subject to scrutiny by several senior members of the school's staff, including the Chair of College, to ensure that sufficient safeguards have been identified in relation to the proposed activity. Written parental consent for their child to take part is sought and obtained in advance of the activity. External organisations used by the school to provide outdoor pursuits are required to forward their own risk assessment to the school so they can assess whether their arrangements are safe. The school benefits from having some staff who have certificates in activities, such as mountain leadership. Boarders have their own room within the host family home and they report that host families are sensitive to their need for privacy - "no-one would enter the room without knocking and waiting for me to say come in." On appointment, the school advises host families on sensible precautionary measures they can take in order not to compromise the privacy of boarders or themselves. The internal knowledge that the school has about some of the people who work at the school protects children to some extent. However, external checks completed are not sufficiently robust to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Some of the shortfalls identified during this inspection, such as a failure to consistently secure two written references and to ask referees whether there is known reason why the person should not be employed to work with children, were also identified as being absent during previous inspections of the school by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. Further shortfalls include the acceptance of checks with the Criminal Records Bureau that were over 12 months old and had been completed by another organisation in respect of adults and not children. Furthermore not all applicants had submitted a CV, so the school was unable to check for gaps in employment history and there is no evidence that

proof of qualifications has been sought. The school does not have a copy of the most recent guidance issued by the Department for Schools, Children and Families (DSCF) - 'Safer Recruitment in Schools'. Accommodation offered by host families is safe and secure for children to live in. Health and safety arrangements are inherent in the school's practice, however, the measures taken to ensure that the school premises offer a safe environment for children are not always supported by a written risk assessment, such as window restrictors having been fitted to upstairs windows. Health and safety risk assessments are in place for some of the most hazardous areas of the school, such as the chemistry laboratory, but a comprehensive assessment covering all of the premises and grounds is yet to be completed. The school intends that an external contractor will complete such an assessment on its behalf during the summer school holidays. Extensive improvements and additions made to some parts of the premises since the previous welfare inspection have successfully eliminated some areas of risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The school site offers several sporting and recreational facilities, including tennis, basketball and woodwork. A new sports hall is in the process of being built. Boarding families encourage pupils to take part in community based activities during evenings and weekends. Their friendship group is mostly derived through friends and associations they have made at the school. Boarding families do not always know which other families have pupils staying with them. This hinders them from taking a role in extending the 'friendship group' on behalf of the 'boarding pupil'. Boarding families are fully aware of their responsibilities towards pupils and request information about their whereabouts and anticipated time of return. A well-established tutor system provides pupils with access to support for education and personal issues. The school expects host families to show an interest in the educational progress made by their 'lodging pupil' by attending parents' evenings and school events. A lack of ongoing feedback about progress results in boarding families having a lack of clarity about any help boarding pupils require in advance of exams. Pupils staying with host families have their own study facilities in their bedrooms. The school's 'Inclusion policy' states that the 'school is open to accepting children with physical and/or intellectual disabilities'. Pupils from overseas are welcomed and this offers a positive experience to permanent and visiting pupils alike.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The school council provides a forum through which all students can express their views about the school and about the way that the boarding family scheme is organised. Opportunities exist for lodging pupils to meet directly with the boarding family co-ordinator to discuss any matters arising. Formal feedback on the pupil's experience of living with the boarding family is sought at the end of the placement. Boarding families report that the school's buddy system helps overseas students settle into the school but consider it would be beneficial to the students if the duration was extended. Boarding families provide computer and telephone facilities for use by boarding pupils to help them maintain contact with their families and friends. The school also has a public telephone that pupils can use to phone home; the area in which it is located is also used as a storage area for cleaning materials and this means the telephone is not accessible.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils have access to appropriate provision within the school when changing for sport and recreational activities. Accommodation provided by boarding families is of an exceptionally high standard.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Pupils and parents receive information about the school as they start their association with the school. The pupil and parent handbook informs them about the aims of the school and the way it deals with matters such as discipline, complaints, child protection and bullying. The handbook includes a statement on the contribution that home boarding makes to the school. The school does not offer boarding accommodation for pupils but on admission to the school they can apply to be placed in home boarding with families. The teacher assuming responsibility for recruiting and supervision of boarding families is well-experienced in the role. All boarding families and pupils are clear about role of the boarding family co-ordinator and see the role as one which is key to a successful placement. Boarding families receive clear guidance about their roles and responsibilities. The school organises training opportunities for home stay families three times a year. These occasions also provide the opportunity for them to discuss and share experiences. Boarding families are usually recruited because they already have an association with the school, for example, their own children are pupils at the school. This gives the school confidence that children will be safely placed in the homes that they use. Although the school completes comprehensive assessments in matters such as accommodation provision and an interview, the failure to complete two objective written references could potentially place children at risk. Furthermore, the school has not always completed its own checks with the Criminal Records Bureau but has accepted historical checks completed by another organisation. In some instances these checks have not included a check against the Protection of Children Act. The school's suitability decision is therefore not based on complete or up to date information. These matters are similar to those shortfalls identified in the 'Staying Safe' section of the report and one recommendation will be made to cover both matters. The school's failure to retain and record information about the annual checks in an organised manner meant that it was not possible to access written evidence of the process of interviews and annual checks that host families and the school describe as taking place. Host families have a clear understanding of their role based on the written guidance and verbal advice they receive from the host family co-ordinator. Pupils are supervised unobtrusively by staff during recreation periods at school. Boarding families are acutely aware of their responsibilities towards boarders and are well-informed of their movements and whereabouts. Time away from the family home has to be negotiated. A discreet adult presence is provided when friends visit. Senior staff have responsibility for recording and monitoring of records. Information about host families is not organised in a manner that facilitates monitoring of matters such as annual visits. Records relating to accidents, sanctions and risk assessments are monitored for significant issues as entries are recorded. The school has not received any formal complaints and a central record is not currently kept of informal complaints that are made. The school is organised in a manner that ensure that pupils receive a good standard of care. However, written documentation is not always in place to support the practices that take place.

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 that recruitment procedures for staff and host families fully comply with the matters set out in standard 38.4 and 51.4-7 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding schools and with the guidance issued by the Department of Children, Schools and Families- 'Safer Recruitment in Schools' (NMS 38.4 and NMS 51.4-51.7)
- ensure that a comprehensive risk assessment is completed of the premises and grounds as intended and that this is subject to regular review (NMS 47.9)
- implement a central record for the recording of formal and informal complaints, to include a description of the complaint, the action taken in response and the outcome (NMS 5)
- establish a system for providing more regular feedback to host families about educational achievement and examination preparation (NMS 43)
- consider extending the buddy system for a longer duration to help overseas students settle into the school (NMS 21)
- ensure that written information is completed and retained in an organised manner in relation to the checks completed on host families including a report of the accommodation assessment, 2 written references, a written agreement, an annual visit and feedback received from pupils about the standard of care provided (NMS 51)

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.