

Kingham Hill School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Christopher Garrett
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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

Kingham Hill School is an independent school located five miles from the market town of Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire. The school has a strong Christian ethos that is well documented in the school literature. The school prides itself in providing a 'whole life' education and does not overly focus on academic ability as a criteria for joining the school. The school provides boarding and day facilities for both boys and girls. Boarding is provided for a total of 178 boarders. The boarding provision consists of seven boarding houses that are located on the main school site. Four boarding houses provide spaces for 103 boys, two boarding houses provide spaces for 39 females. A junior house provides accommodation for 39 boys and girls. Sizes of the house vary and the numbers of boarders they can accommodate range from 16 to 36. The school is committed to providing boarding provision and to a full boarding model with timetabled lessons on a Saturday morning. The preferred structure for staffing the boarding houses is for a husband and wife being resident houseparents supported by gap students and non-residential tutors.

Summary

The purpose of this visit was to complete an unannounced interim inspection. This focussed on evaluating the response made by the school to recommendations raised during the last key inspection. An overall view of the quality and standard of service provided by the school is provided by reading this report alongside that of the key inspection completed on 4 February 2008. A number of key standards relating to the safety and protection of boarders were also assessed. The overall judgement has been reassessed based on findings of the previous key inspection and on the evaluation of improvements achieved by the school. The inspection was completed over two days by an Ofsted Social Care Inspector and a Boarding School Advisory Inspector.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This section reports only on improvements relating to the recommendations set at the previous inspection undertaken in February 2008. Following the inspection the school drew up an action plan to prioritise and address all of the recommendations made in the report. The plan included details of action the school had identified to respond to the recommendations, the planned outcomes and set deadlines for these to be achieved by. The school has been proactive and has fully addressed a number of the recommendations made following the last key inspection. These have all been met within the timescales set by the school. The completion of the remaining recommendations have been affected by a number of factors. This includes areas of building work that had already been planned and agreed by the school and could not be rescheduled. The management of the school has been going through a transitional period whilst waiting for a new Headmaster and Boarding Mentor to be appointed. The responsibility for the organisation, implementation and overseeing of the response to some actions has been delegated to the new Headmaster and Boarding Mentor and these could not be started upon until they were in post. The school's self imposed deadlines for the full completion of the actions for some recommendations are set for later in the academic year. However, there is evidence that in all cases some action has already been taken and consequently a number of recommendations

have been assessed as being partially completed. The school was recommended that it ensured that there are sufficient numbers of staff qualified in first aid and that boarders are routinely consulted about the catering provision within the school. In response to this the medical staff have completed an audit of staff skills identifying those that have a first aid qualification. Inset training days on First aid have been undertaken and further ones scheduled to increase the number of qualified staff within the school. An examination of training records shows that there is at least one member of staff in each boarding house that has a first aid qualification. First aid has been identified as part of the core training to be completed by all staff with boarding responsibilities. A requirement to complete this training has been included in the revised job descriptions for houseparents. Medical staff continue to be available every day and for part of the weekend to respond to any emergency. These arrangements ensure that boarders are able to access a qualified first aider at all times. Boarders are given the opportunity to volunteer to sit on the school's Food Committee and represent the views of their fellow boarders. Records show that the frequency that these meetings are held has been increased and that they are now held at regular intervals. Boarders speak positively about the committee and give examples of changes that they have been able to bring about. A member of the medical staff now routinely attends the Food Committee meetings and is consulted on diet and healthy eating. The member of staff is sent a copy of the weekly menus to comment on or to make suggestions for any changes. The school was recommended that it completed an audit to ensure that all staff have a current Criminal Record Bureau checks (CRB's) and that a review of its recruitment and vetting procedures should be undertaken. The school has recently appointed an Acting Human Resource Manager (AHRM) to cover whilst the current member of staff is on maternity leave. The AHRM has taken responsibility to complete an audit of staff CRB's and has also checked all staff files to identify any documentation or records that have are missing. Arrangements have been made for missing information to be replaced. The school is in the process of completing retrospective CRB checks on all staff and the Headmaster has stated his intention for these to be updated every three years. The school has recently appointed a number of new staff with boarding responsibilities. An examination of staff records show that in most cases the school has obtained appropriate checks including CRB clearance before staff members have taken up their positions. However in a few cases this has not been possible and on these occasions the school has followed the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance and arranged for staff to be supervised whilst completing their boarding duties. The Headmaster has issued guidance to the Human Resources Department and to member of the Senior Management Team that in future all CRB checks must be completed prior to a staff member commencing work and his intention to fully comply with the National Minimum Standards (NMS). The AHRM has reviewed the school's recruitment procedures. A checklist is placed in each file to indicate when checks on references, qualifications, and vetting has been completed. A further checklist is completed by the interviewer and details checks on gaps in employment dates. The AHRM had been unaware of the school's responsibility to make telephone verification of references and has amended the vetting check list to include this. Recently appointed staff files were seen to be well organised and contained all of the information required by the NMS. A spreadsheet containing details of all checks that have been completed by the school is in the process of being made. The action that the school has taken in regards to its vetting and recruitment procedures improves the standard of safeguarding in the school and helps to ensure that the boarders are not exposed to potential abusers. The school has taken positive steps regarding on site security arrangements. Each of the main entrances to the boarding houses is fitted with a key pad. Codes to these are updated and issued by the Bursary on a termly basis. Main doors to those boarding houses which were visited, were checked

and found to be shut and secure. The standard of security to the entrance to Bradford House is very good and provides a benchmark for future developments. Boarders within Bradford House are also piloting a wireless panic alarm system with a view that if successful it will be included in the refurbishment programme to the rest of the boarding provision. Consultation has taken place with a number of specialist security firms regarding the access to the campus. Consideration is being given to additional security measure including the possible installation of closed circuit television systems to act as a deterrent. The school has completed its next stage of campus lighting and has bought the equipment needed to complete a further stage in the immediate future. Boarders speak positively about this improvement and state that they feel safer moving around the areas in which the new lighting has been installed. The school was recommended that it review the arrangements for the management of the boarding provision and to review the numbers and deployment of staff with boarding responsibilities. A new Boarding Mentor has recently been appointed. This post is temporary and will be reviewed along with other managerial arrangements and responsibilities by the new Headmaster after a year. The Boarding Mentor's job description has been reviewed and includes a specific responsibility in leading the school's responses to the Ofsted social care inspections. The Boarding Mentor is now a part in the Senior Management Team. Lines of communication between the Boarding Mentor and the Bursary are said to have been improved. The Boarding Mentor is scheduled to have a regular meeting with the Headmaster and also with the Domestic Bursar. These arrangements ensure that the Boarding Mentor is able to be actively involved in the practice and development of the boarding in the school. One of the school governors has been asked to take a specific interest in all aspects of the boarding provision. How this is to be achieved has not yet been finalised but the Headmaster envisages regular visits by the governors to the boarding provision with a report of the visit being submitted to the Boarding Mentor. The school has reviewed the responsibilities that can be undertaken by gap students. The school has started a programme of appointing older post graduate gap students who will be able to bring a different set of skills and level of maturity to their roles. A review is being undertaken of the access to the boarding house during the day. Recently appointed houseparents state that there is not an expectation that they supervise the houses during the day, find their duties manageable and report that there are no lean staffing times. Arrangements are made for their absence to be covered by tutors with boarding responsibilities who are allocated to each of the houses. The school has implemented a programme of induction for newly appointed houseparents. Recently appointed staff completed a four day induction programme before the start of term which included guidance of fire procedures, completing fire risk assessments, first aid and a briefing of child protection issues. Where possible staff have worked alongside those houseparents who had been previously working in the houses. Staff spoken to felt the induction programme was good, helpful and state that they feel well supported by the other members of staff allocated to their houses. A number of recommendations were found to be partially met. These recommendations remain in place for further assessment during the next inspection. Part of the recently appointed Boarding Mentor's role is to complete a review of the sanctions being used in the boarding houses. The previous Boarding Mentor had completed a review on the use of group sanctions. It is unclear if this was circulated to all staff and an examination of the document shows that some of the advice it includes is not clear. Staff advise that there has been discussion on formalising the format for recording sanctions and for standardising those used throughout the houses. The Boarding Mentor is aware of his responsibility to monitor sanction records for patterns, trends proportionality and fairness and is implementing a programme to undertake this. An examination of the Incident (sanction) Books shows that the frequency that sanctions are used varies from house to house. A few of the houses make use

of group sanctions which can lead to boarders being punished for something that they have not done or are in a position to rectify. There remains a perception, amongst those boarders spoken to that sanctions are not always proportionate or consistently applied. They believe that the use of group sanctions is unfair. The school has been proactive in its approach to undertaking fire risk assessments for each of the boarding houses. Houseparents from each of the boarding houses has been provided specific training on the role of the Fire Marshall and on how to complete a fire risk assessment. Systems are in place for any new staff to undertake the fire training as part of their induction programme. The fire risk assessment is in two parts. A generic risk assessment applicable to all of the houses and a individual specific assessment for each of the boarding houses. There is provision for the generic assessment to be modified to reflect any identified significant findings or shortfalls. An examination of the fire records show that as yet the generic risk assessment implemented last term has not been yet updated and not all of the specific house assessments have been completed. The domestic bursar advises that it had been planned for these to be completed during the first four weeks of the current term. The school has partially met the recommendation that all areas accessible to the boarders are free from safety hazards. A system for completing regular Portable Appliance Testing has been implemented and records are kept. A programme of covering glass in windows not fitted with safety glass with clear safety film has been implemented and is on going. Items of broken furniture have been replaced and communal areas and play rooms are organised and orderly. However, a tour of the boarding house identified some safety hazards that had not been attended to in a timely manner. Restrictors to some windows had been broken and not repaired and a number of fire doors are not fully closing. Records show that issues relating to the fire doors had been previously reported to the Bursary. There is a perception amongst some staff that routine maintenance issues were not undertaken as maintenance staff were heavily committed to the refurbishment of Bradford House which was completed during the summer break. The school has been unable to fully meet the recommendation referring an audit of boarding provision and identifying and prioritising all maintenance issues. The school has already committed time and resources to the next stage of its five year refurbishment programme. Bradford House was completed during the summer holidays and sets a new benchmark for the standard of boarding accommodation with the school. An assessment of the safety, security and state of repair to the older style windows in some boarding houses has been undertaken. The Domestic Bursar has started on an audit of other maintenance issues in the remaining house and there is a recognition amongst senior staff that some areas of work will not be able to wait until planned refurbishment takes place. Once completed, the Domestic Bursar plans to consult with the Boarding Mentor about the audit and assessments and reach a joint agreement on prioritisation. There is an awareness amongst senior staff that specific records relating to the safety and welfare of the boarders need to be regularly monitored. Some records have already been delegated to members of staff who report back to various groups including the Health and Safety Committee. The Boarding Mentor has been delegated responsibility for monitoring a number of key records including sanctions and fire logbooks. However, as he has only just taken up his post and the first round of monitoring checks are not yet due to be undertaken these have not yet been completed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The judgement for this outcome is based on findings of the previous key inspection and on the evaluation of improvements achieved by the school. No further evidence has been collected to suggest that this should be amended.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The judgement for this outcome has been amended and is based on findings of the previous key inspection, an evaluation of improvements achieved by the school and from a review of two key standards. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring that the pupils and boarders are protected from abuse. Staff spoken to are aware of their roles and responsibilities and know how to appropriately respond to any disclosures or allegations of abuse or serious concerns about a boarder's safety. The school has a number of documents relating to child protection which provide guidance to staff. Following recent changes to the senior management within the school the roles of Designated Person for Child Protection has been allocated to the Deputy Headmaster who works in conjunction with the Assistant Chaplain. The designated members of staff advise that there have been no recent child protection incidents. Whole School staff training took place in Sept 2007. The new Headmaster is in the process of reviewing how frequently this training should be updated and how it will be delivered. New staff are given briefing on child protection procedures as part of their induction programme. Briefings are also given to older students who are involved in the school per support programmes. One of the Designated People has undertaken training specific to the role. The other Designated Person has previously fulfilled this role but his/her training is not current. The school has recently made a strong commitment to ensure that all of its boarding staff have a good understanding of fire awareness and safety. All of the Houseparents have received training on acting as Fire Marshals and on how to complete a fire risk assessment. Staff are more aware of safe practice issues and none of the fire doors were found to be wedged open. The school is in the process of piloting different door closing mechanisms with a view of rolling the most useful out over the rest of the boarding houses. Systems are in place for the regular checking and servicing of fire safety and detection equipment. New Fire Logbooks have been provided to each of the houses but at the time of the inspection were not generally in use. Previous records have been archived. An assurance was given that all regular checks, which are the responsibility of the Fire Marshals in each of the houses, have been routinely completed. A new system for completing Fire Risk Assessments is in the process of being implemented in the boarding houses.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The judgement for this outcome is based on findings of the previous key inspection. No further evidence has been collected to suggest that this should be amended.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The judgement for this outcome is based on findings of the previous key inspection. No further evidence has been collected to suggest that this should be amended.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The judgement for this outcome is based on findings of the previous key inspection and an evaluation of improvements achieved by the school. No further evidence has been collected to suggest that this should be amended.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The judgement for this outcome is based on findings of the previous key inspection and an evaluation of improvements achieved by the school. No further evidence has been collected to suggest that this should be amended.

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):

- review the range of sanctions used in the boarding houses. (NMS.4)
- review and fully implement comprehensive fire risk assessments and procedures for each of the boarding houses. (NMS.26)
- ensure that all areas accessible by the boarders are free from safety hazards. (NMS.47)
- audit the standard of the boarding accommodation and identify and prioritise all maintenance issues. (NMS.40)
- ensure that all records are regularly monitored by a senior member of staff. (NMS.23)

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.