

# Five Islands School Boarding House St Mary's

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspection date</b>	9 October 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Chris Passmore
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Registered person</b>	Council of the Isles of Scilly
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Andrew Penman
<b>Nominated person</b>	Mr P Hygate
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	4 October 2005

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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

The Five Islands Federated School comprises five separate schools located on St Mary's, Treco, St Martin's and St Agnes, Isles of Scilly. Four of these are primary schools, plus a secondary school on St Mary's. As part of its commitment to the education of secondary aged children the Islands Council provides a boarding house, Mundesley on St Mary's, for children from the off-islands. Five Islands School is therefore a Maintained Boarding School and subject to inspection under the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. The school provides weekly boarding for boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years. Children return home for weekends and all school holidays. Mundesley is a combination of original house and extension and provides accommodation consisting of dormitory bedrooms, with more individual arrangements for senior students. Girls are accommodated on the first floor and boys on the ground floor. There are toilet and bathing provision on each floor level together with a dining room and lounge on the ground floor. There is a kitchen from which breakfast and evening meals are prepared and served to boarders. Lunchtime meals are provided at school. After Year 11 studies are completed students wishing to continue on to further education have to follow courses on the mainland.

### Summary

This was an announced inspection undertaken against the key National Minimum Standards for boarding schools. Since the last inspection the school has undergone sustained improvements in academic and social welfare areas. The most significant development since the last inspection is that the boarding house is now a fully inclusive part of the school community. There is a marked improvement in lines of communication between school and hostel with a free flow of information and personnel between the two. The Headteacher's line management and former boarding schools experience has contributed hugely to this success. There are various formats and forums for the exchange of information and staff from the school make drop-in visits to the hostel quite informally. House parents are readily included in meetings at school and with other agencies, and play an increased part in the transition arrangements for up and coming Year 6 pupils from the off-island communities. The benefit for pupils is that they come to the secondary school stage more prepared for the boarding experience and knowing the characters of the boarding house parents. The hostel also welcomes pupils from St Mary's to share its activities and facilities as part of the community. This maintains and encourages peer relationships and helps keep pupils focused on positive activities. The range of individual needs being met by the school is varied and challenging, especially for the house parents and boarding staff who look after the children and young people during the weekdays. Each situation is met with openness and genuine care. House parents demonstrated good insight into the needs of individual children and their responses were appropriate. One parent commented on the lengths to which house parents are prepared to go in support of the child, stating this as 'dedication'. Governors are committed to maintaining the boarding house and plan for improvements and refurbishments. The inspection concluded that children staying at Mundesley are well cared for and protected by staff who have a wealth of life experience spanning a diversity of cultures. The boarders themselves stated through questionnaire responses that they were well nourished, felt safe, were not being bullied and knew who they would turn to for help or advice if worried about anything. Boarders enjoy their stay at the hostel and it is an opportunity to prepare for Further Education, post 16 years of age living on the mainland.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

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

The last inspection report made six recommendations for good practice. These included recommendations for home remedy medication, staff training in food safety, criminal records checking of staff and boatmen and boarding house premises improvements. All recommendations have been acted on resulting in compliance of the school with National Minimum Standards and an enhancement of boarders' quality of life whilst living away from home.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Catering arrangements within Mundesley are excellent. Staff are trained in food safety and provide healthy, nutritious meals each evening with fresh fruit, snacks and drinks available at all reasonable times. Boarders are encouraged to follow healthy lifestyles, including diet. Issues of boarders' health care are well documented and demonstrate both the attention of staff to boarders' health and the limitations of the Island's healthcare resources. Boarding staff manage complex as well as general health issues very well in conjunction with parents and other appropriate professional teams from the mainland. However, health records for more complex care issues could not always be tracked easily. Parents are responsible for their children's general health care and for ensuring boarders have sufficient medication for their weekly stays at Mundesley. Not all parents send required medication in named containers or ensure that multiple medications are sent in individual containers.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Mundesley has robust systems in place to protect and promote the welfare of boarders. House parents work closely with the designated safeguarding staff for the school and the local professional social care team. Governors and staff are pro-active in providing resources and services for the physical safety of boarders and are aware of the wider implications of safeguarding in relation to the transient populous of the islands. Boarders' responses to questionnaires indicate they feel safe at Mundesley and are happy to talk to boarding staff if they have any problems or concerns. They are also aware that there is an independent person they can call if they feel that would be more appropriate. Boarders' report that bullying within the boarding house is not an issue and that if there is bullying in school then this is dealt with under the school's 'zero tolerance' policy.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people attending the secondary school and who board at Mundesley maintain peer relationships and increase their self-reliance through opportunities and experiences they could not have if returning home each night. Boarders receive care and attention from the house staff on an individual basis and are integrated into the St Mary's community. Mundesley is also now more accessible to St Mary's resident young people, who visit their boarding friends and join in activities at the boarding house just as they would with fellow pupils in their respective family homes. House staff are aware of the implications and limitations on numbers and are pro-actively seeking additional accommodation sources to supplement the hostel

accommodation. Staff have increased the range of activities available to boarders and these now include regular swimming pool slots and local youth club memberships. House parents are able to gently broaden boarders' knowledge and appreciation of issues such as equality and diversity through examples from their own life experiences and the use of appropriate posters and media articles.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' questionnaire responses illustrated a range of meetings and forums for them to have their say in how the hostel operates. Boarders maintain regular contact with their family either using mobiles, emails, the office phone or house pay-phone. There are regular update telephone calls between Mundesley and families and parents often call into the boarding house when they are on St Mary's. Boarders have a variety of means to contribute their views on the running of the hostel and of expressing their feelings on 'hot issues'. House parents display a range of news articles on a bulletin board to keep boarders up-to-date with world news and affairs. This is done in such a way that it draws the readers' attention through its scope of subject matter that ranges from the bizarre through humorous to topical issues and headline news.

Arrangements for the transition of pupils from primary to secondary education and their introduction to boarding have been strengthened so that now there is an extended time over which young pupils get to know boarding house staff before visiting and eventually having their taster sessions at Mundesley. The atmosphere in the boarding house throughout the inspection period was one of young people able to relax after their school day; there was structured time for homework and chores as well as free time and leisure time spent in activities. There was much laughter and spontaneous contacts with staff over a wide range of issues and requests.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Governors are committed to retain Mundesley as part of the Five Islands School provision and have maintained a programme of improvements, redecoration and refurbishment since the last inspection. There are further plans to improve the accommodation for boarders who may be ill and to replace bedroom furniture on a rolling programme. Bedroom lighting relies on central ceiling lights and can be harsh and some of the bedroom furniture is showing signs of age and use. Boarding numbers have been reduced and there is now a more realistic number accommodated in relation to the space available. Toilet and bathing facilities have been improved since the last inspection and these generally work well and improve the standards though there is a problem with one facility. In good weather the hostel's indoor and outdoor space provides opportunities for boarders to spread their numbers around the premises but there is less space available for leisure and relaxation during periods of poor weather or winter times. Boarding staff are looking at the possibilities of additional recreational venues as well as using existing community facilities.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The organisation and management of boarding has moved on enormously since the last inspection, mainly due to the leadership given by the Headteacher and his previous experiences in a residential education setting. Boarding is now a fully integrated part of the school and

recognised as such by all members of the school community. Communication between the school and boarding house is strong and staff from each resource are mutually supportive. The current house parents are relatively new in post but have achieved a great deal in a short space of time. There are strong bonds between them and staff at the school; they have established good relations with the Parent Liaison Group and various professional teams both on the island and the mainland. There has been a quiet but confident approach to the management of the boarding house and the establishment of expected standards of behaviour and conduct. Boarders have confidence in, and respect for, the house staff and this is evident in their interactions with each other. There is a professional management review and appraisal system in operation in respect of house parents as well as opportunities for further professional training in boarding practice, given a suitable and affordable style can be resourced. Parents responses to questionnaires included one comment on the extent to which house parents are prepared to go to look after the interests of the children in their care, quoting 'That is dedication'.

## 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):

- consider health chronology record for some children (NMS 7 & 15)
- ensure all products provided for children by parents are clearly marked with their name and are one product only in bottle (NMS15)
- continue programme of refurbishment of bedroom furniture and lighting review (NMS 42& 43)