

Royal Grammar School

Inspection report for boarding school

Unique reference number	SC049244
Inspection date	13 November 2008
Inspector	Robert Smith / Clare Davies
Type of Inspection	Key

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Registered person	Buckinghamshire County Council
Head / Principal	Roy Page
Nominated person	
Date of last inspection	9 February 2004

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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

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of boarding provision at the Royal Grammar School is good and the key National Minimum Standards are met. Boarders are well looked after and thoroughly enjoy and celebrate their boarding experience and opportunities. The enthusiasm of boarders is seen in comments from surveys such as 'It's a great experience and we are well looked after and the staff are great,' 'The house tutors are good because I can go and talk to them whenever I want to' and 'It's just generally great fun'. These comments confirm the warm and family-like atmosphere that is successfully promoted by the boarding staff team.

The inspection identified many areas of strong practice as well as small number of areas for improvement. The school has fully and promptly addressed recommendations arising from previous inspections and acted to address emerging shortfalls as this inspection progressed.

The school provides good support and guidance for boarders to help ensure they develop healthy lifestyles. Health care needs are well met by the school, drawing on external support and services where needed. Medication is generally well managed although there are minor shortfalls in the consistency of record-keeping and the clarity of risk considerations when boarder might self medicate. Boarders receive good quality meals from the dedicated catering service that supports the boarding house.

The school takes great care to ensure boarders are kept safe. Pupils report no experience of bullying in boarding and are well protected by the school's rigorous approach and prompt

actions should any bullying occur. The school has comprehensive and effective systems in place to minimise the likelihood of abuse and there is excellent monitoring of pupils about whom there may be welfare concerns. Good attention is paid to ensuring boarders experience appropriate levels of privacy.

Behaviour standards are extremely high and are supported by the school's fair, transparent and effective approach to managing misbehaviour. The school has clear and effective systems in place for dealing with any concerns or complaints boarders might have.

Recruitment processes are sound although not all the additional expectations of the relevant National Minimum Standards are being met in full. Structures for oversight of staff appointed prior to completion of all checks are not sufficiently formalised. Good attention is paid to ensuring boarders do not have contact with unchecked persons from outside the school through careful management of visitors and effective security measures.

The school maintains a generally good approach to matters of fire safety however systems and procedures for fire risk assessment lack consistency. The school pays good attention to ensuring boarders are not exposed to risks and hazards through careful attention to risk assessment on and off site and through prompt attention to any concerns or defects that arise. More day-to-day activities in boarding have however not been subject to formal risk assessment.

Boarders receive excellent levels of pastoral and academic support in the boarding house through the system of personal tutors. This is further supported by the well regarded input of prefects. Staff work well with the school to ensure boarders' needs are met. The school is also working towards improving the accessibility and effectiveness of the Independent Listener role as an additional support. Boarders are provided with an excellent structure of support around academic work that helps them develop effective studying skills and improve their academic performance.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding.

The school positively recognises and celebrates cultural and religious diversity and ensures the needs of boarders are well met. The atmosphere in the boarding house, which accommodates boarders from a wide range of backgrounds, is inclusive and harmonious and there is no evidence of inappropriate discrimination.

The school has good systems in place to ensure the views of boarders are listened to and they make an active contribution to how boarding is organised and delivered.

The accommodation provided for boarders is of a very high standard and offers them excellent facilities for day-to-day living and study.

The school provides clear and comprehensive information on boarding life, expectations and criteria for admission for potential boarders and their families. Boarding is well managed by a suitably experienced and enthusiastic team. The value and contribution of boarding is well recognised and promoted in the school. Boarding staff are well supported and have access to relevant training opportunities. Staffing levels in boarding during the week are good. However the increasing numbers of full boarders across a wider age range means that the lower level of weekend staffing cover is less satisfactory.

There is effective monitoring of boarding practice carried out both formally and informally to ensure boarders are being looked after well and there is an evident commitment in the school to critically self-evaluate practice and positively respond to constructive criticism.

ensure consistent records of medication administration are maintained and that more formal assessment of self medication arrangements for boarders is undertaken (NMS 15)

ensure fire risk assessments are kept up to date, available at all times and subject to regular review. (NMS 26)

ensure recruitment procedures fully comply with the relevant National Minimum Standards and that supervision of staff appointed prior to completion of all checks is formalised. (NMS 38)

ensure that procedures for risk assessment are extended to cover the physical environment and working practices in the boarding house. (NMS 40)

review the levels of staffing cover provided in boarding during weekend periods. (NMS 31)

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure consistent records of medication administration are maintained and that more formal assessment of self medication arrangements for boarders is undertaken (NMS 15)
- ensure fire risk assessments are kept up to date, available at all times and subject to regular review. (NMS 26)
- ensure recruitment procedures fully comply with the relevant National Minimum Standards and that supervision of staff appointed prior to completion of all checks is formalised. (NMS 38)
- ensure that procedures for risk assessment are extended to cover the physical environment and working practices in the boarding house. (NMS 40)
- review the levels of staffing cover provided in boarding during weekend periods. (NMS 31)