

St Andrew's School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
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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 school is a co-educational preparatory school which currently accommodates 19 full time and weekly boarders from the age of seven up to the age of 13. The school also runs a flexi boarding system for around 50 pupils in the school. The school as a whole including boarders is around 500 pupils. The school is set in large grounds which include an adventure playground, tennis courts, indoor swimming pool and sports field. The school is set in a large building and the children who board have their dormitories mainly on the first and second floors.

Summary

At this announced inspection all the key standards were assessed. The school provides a good level of care for the children who board there. Each child's individuality is valued and respected and the ethos in the school ensures that those who board there are nurtured and developed both academically and socially. The strong leadership of the school and systems operated therein ensure that all the children generally have their welfare promoted and protected. Systems within the school did fail to ensure two gap year students were correctly safety checked to work at the school. A formal programme of training and supervision needs to be provided for all staff working in the boarding provision including the gap students. The size of the school ensures that all the children can be monitored and supported closely and that there is 'always someone to talk to.'

Boarders live in comfortable accommodation and benefit from a wide range of activities. The boarding ethos of the school is relaxed, open and homely and there is an emphasis placed on respecting each other and showing courtesy and manners to everyone. As a result of this inspection six recommendations were made .

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This is not applicable for this report.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The school offers clear guidance to the pupils on the promotion of healthy living and lifestyles. Other health issues are discussed in Personal, Social, Citizenship and Health Education within the school day and the children can approach members of staff to discuss any personal issues or problems. Appropriate information is provided to the children on issues such as illegal substances, sexual health, and other social issues. This information is shared sensitively and commensurate with the children's development and understanding, bearing in mind that some of the children join the school at the age of seven.

Thorough health records are developed for the children. These contain information such as health histories, allergies and specific health needs, vaccination records as well as any issues which may affect a child's emotional wellbeing such as bereavement or divorce. Specific health plans are kept for children who have identified health needs such as anaphylaxis or Attention

Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Sensitive information is shared with members of staff on a 'need to know' basis and all records are kept securely stored.

There are clear policies and guidance with regards to the monitoring and promoting of the children's health. Examples of policies include medication, what to do if the nurses are unavailable, injury during games, asthma and anaphylaxis. Staff within the boarding house are trained in first aid and the administration of medication. The policies are reviewed and overseen by the registered school nurse who is very experienced. The administration and storage of medication is closely and robustly audited and monitored. Records are thorough and up to date. Clear records are kept of medication coming to the school and a stock take is maintained to ensure that all the records tally. Medication is kept securely stored. The school does have consent on file for each child but the form does not contain all forms of medical treatment.

The children have access to a doctor who comes to the school three times a week. Additionally, appointments with a male doctor can be arranged if that is what a child wants. Other health appointments are also in place if they are needed, these include opticians, dentists or other specialist input, such as a speech and language therapist if needed.

The nurse provides caring and sensitive attention to children who present themselves to her. She is very aware that some children may at times require reassurance and a kind word rather than medical attention. Support offered to the children is nurturing and attentive. The school nurse notifies parents or guardians of any illnesses or injuries and clear records are kept of any accidents. The sick bay is situated next to the nurse's room.

The standard of catering in the school is outstanding. The catering for the school is managed by a company which employs the staff to work in the school. The kitchen is well managed and the chef ensures that all the staff are trained appropriately to their roles. The kitchen is regularly cleaned and a visit by the Environmental Health Officer graded the premises as 'excellent'. Meals are sourced as much as possible with local produce and most of the food is home made. The menu is prepared on a five weekly basis and offers three choices on each main meal including a vegetarian option and unanimous feedback from the children, members of staff and parents stated that the food is of a very good standard. Additionally, the catering staff are very aware of specific dietary needs for any particular children and ensure that these are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The size of boarding operation in the school means that there are always adults around to support the children and that any incidents or niggles between them are quickly noted. The school has a policy to protect and give guidance about bullying which also includes what the bully can expect. Guidance for staff is also in place for staff. The school is involved in the national anti bullying week and teaches about bullying in its Personal Social and Health Education. The children when asked did not feel there was any bullying in the boarding house.

The children are encouraged to live as part of a close community and to look out for each other. The school approach ensures that bullying is unacceptable and the children report it is not a problem.

The school has a member of staff who is responsible for the monitoring of child protection and who trains and disseminates information about child protection to all members of staff. There

is a child protection policy in place for the staff to follow and this contains clear guidance with regards to reporting issues of concern and how to respond to disclosures by children. The policy does not include full information of reporting practices used in the school for outside professional agencies. However reporting and communication in child protection matters is made with the appropriate agencies. All members of staff and gap students have child protection training as part of their induction and the child protection co-ordinator ensures that all members of staff receive refresher training and reminders about their role and obligations every term. This training includes all adults who work in the school, including maintenance staff, catering staff and domestic staff. All members of staff have access to the Local Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures. The level of awareness about child protection issues and the adults' responsibility to keep the children safe, ensures that there is an excellent commitment to ensuring that the children are kept safe from abuse.

The children are very clear as to what behaviour is expected from them. There are sanctions in place such as non use of computers, extra chores and being asked to take time out quietly to think and reflect about behaviour. Disciplinary measures are seen as an opportunity for children to discuss and address their behaviour rather than being seen as a punishment in itself. All sanctions are recorded in the daily record and in a designated record book if the sanction was of a more serious nature.

The school does have a book in which to record any incidents that involve staff handling the children in a physical manner. These incidents are mainly to do with fighting and were dealt with appropriately. The school celebrates achievements and good behaviour and rewards the children with privileges.

The children have numerous opportunities to voice their opinions and complaints. It is clear that most of the children are confident to express their views both in writing and verbally. This means that any complaints or issues can be passed on to various members of staff including the head of boarding and head teacher. The children are responded to when they raise issues and feedback from them confirms that their views are taken seriously and acknowledged. Complaints from parents were seen to be dealt with appropriately.

Boarders and staff alike are protected from risks to their safety and wellbeing. A robust and comprehensive programme of risk assessment identifies and addresses any known or perceived dangers. Such risk assessments are regularly reviewed and when necessary, amended. The whole environment is risk assessed with potentially hazardous areas and situations such as asbestos, the air conditioning, water supplies, swimming pool and the chemicals used there. The children know which areas of the school are out of bounds. The house is surrounded by lighting and the outside doors and stairwells are alarmed and doors have coded locks.

When trips are carried out away from the school site, robust and individualised risk assessments are completed. These risk assessments are not only completed by the member of staff responsible for the trip or activity but are checked by the bursar who is responsible for the organised trips. A new addition to the risk assessment is to have the more senior children to fill in a risk assessment of their own. The children living at the school are encouraged to take part in activities which encourage their confidence and experience and in this context are encouraged to take calculated and sensible risks. Examples of such activities are cooking club, athletics, brownies or scouts.

Records confirm that frequent testing of fire equipment and alarms is carried out and that fire drills occur regularly in both daylight and at night. An inspection of the premises was carried out by the fire brigade in 2008 and this found all the systems in place for fire safety to be satisfactory.

Children living in the school have their privacy respected. They are able to shower, wash and change privately in the bath and shower rooms and dormitories. Staff supervision is discrete, ensuring that the younger children have easy access to assistance and guidance if needed, but not impinging on older and more able children.

The school operates a rigorous and robust recruitment process which ensures that all adults working in the school in whatever role are subject to references and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. However it was found at this inspection that two CRB checks and certificates of good conduct for the gap students had been over looked. The bursar oversees the compilation of detailed and thorough staff records and telephones references to ensure their veracity. The head teacher also examines the recruitment records to ensure their accuracy.

There are clear guidelines and expectations for visitors to follow. All visitors must wear a visitor's badge when on the premises and sign the visitors' book. Additionally, they are supervised and escorted when on the premises. There are no adults living at the school who do not undertake a working role.

The boarding accommodation is set within the school, no one has access to it unless they are meant to be there. The stairwells to the boarding house are alarmed. The boarding living areas are for the exclusive use of the children who live at the school and are not shared.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children in the school are offered a wide and varied range of activities. There is a strong belief in the school that there is something at which each child can enjoy and excel, whether this is academically, in sport, drama, music or hobbies. The school provides the pupils with both a wide range of activities in the evening and boarders confirm that the weekends are busy and there is one activity a weekend where they are taken out to different activities such as to Drusilla's, cinema and to the beach. On the day of the inspection there were lots of organised activities such as piglets pantry (cooking), a singing concert, athletics club, computer fun and others.

Additionally the children also have the opportunity to socialise with each other during their free time.

The children have a wide choice of adults to whom they can approach and this includes an independent visitor who not only visits the school but is available by telephone. The children can also access independent telephone help lines such as Child-line. Additionally the children are very aware that they may approach their form tutor, heads of boarding, nurse, gap students, head teacher and his wife or any other teaching staff in the school. The wide range of adults available, combined with the small size of the school means that advice, guidance and reassurance are readily and easily accessible.

The school would arrange for outside specialist support including counsellors or any other health needs. All the children feel that they are listened to and feel that there is 'always someone you can talk to.'

The school has children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Difference is celebrated and seen as an opportunity to learn about different cultures and religions. Cultural and religious issues are taught to the children and opportunities are given to children from different backgrounds to value and enjoy their culture whilst being integrated into the school community, which is Christian based. Children from different religious backgrounds are given the opportunity to attend religious ceremonies and the school facilitates this.

The children's diversity is respected and this is met by dietary needs being respected, religious needs and cultural needs. The school undertakes special meal days and celebrates cultures by holding such days as Korean day and others. The school also held a rice and beans day to highlight how some children have to eat. This was undertaken with permission from parents and guardians.

The school cancelled chapel on a Sunday as it was seen to be irrelevant to the overseas boarders' needs in the boarding house. Chapel is still held in the week.

The size of the boarding operation ensures that those children who for various reasons are struggling to 'fit in' are supported and monitored so that they do not become isolated. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are treated as equals with out any imbalance of power. The school looks to promote all of the pupils' skills and talents.

Clear guidance is in place for members of staff to follow with regards to appreciating and acknowledging different cultural and religious backgrounds and this ethos is spread throughout the school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The children have numerous opportunities to share their views on how they feel they are being cared for and what they would like to improve. Formal forums include the school council, boarding council and the food council. Both consist of pupils chosen by their peers to represent their views to key senior members of staff such as the head teacher and the chef. Thorough minutes are kept of the meetings which contain full agendas. The children said they were able to make decisions about what happens at the weekend.

Children boarding in the school are able to contact parents and loved ones via telephone and email as well as being encouraged to write weekly letters. Children whose families live abroad and in different time zones are allowed to telephone their parents at times that are convenient to the children and their families. It is clear that the school values the children's need to be in contact with their loved ones. Emails and telephone conversations are carried out in private and the right for children to have privacy during these times is acknowledged and protected.

The process of inducting new boarders is sensitive and nurturing, especially for the younger children. All new boarders are given a handbook before they arrive at the school. The handbook describes what they are to expect at the school, the routines and rules as well as what support is available to them if they need it. The children said that the senior boarders helped them

when they arrived to settle down. To underpin this process, members of staff regularly contact the parents of new boarders to update them on their child's progress and how they are settling in.

The ethos of the school is for every member of the community to look out for each other. This is underpinned by the children having adults to whom they can speak to and relax with, especially in the evenings. The children speak highly of the head of boarding, boarding staff as well as the nurse and gap students. The atmosphere and interaction is relaxed and respectful.

It is clear that the views of the children are valued and listened to and that the relationships between the staff and children ensure that respect and tolerance are key values in the school.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Children are able to keep personal possessions secure in lockable spaces provided by the house master. Lockable boxes are available and are charged for by the school. Additionally they all have their own bedside cabinets and lockers for storing clothes.

The school provides a pocket money system which is run by the house master. The children are encouraged to think about how much money they need to take out and spend.

The dormitories are spacious and comfortable. There is a collection of both bunk beds and single beds, each child has some storage space. The children are able to personalise their personal space with posters and pictures. The dormitories are kept tidy by the children and are kept clean by the domestic staff. The common rooms have been established as specific areas for the children to use and are still being developed to create a child focussed areas.

There are adequate numbers of sinks and showers available for the children. The pupils are able to shower privately in the boarding area. Members of staff have separate toilet and shower facilities.

There is a team of staff who meet regularly to discuss the refurbishment and repairs needed throughout the school. The refurbishment program discussed in the minutes and the boarding house is on a rolling programme of renovation.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The different backgrounds of the children living in the school are celebrated and enjoyed and seen as an opportunity to learn about each other. Each child's individuality is acknowledged and valued, whether this be a cultural or religious difference or an individual ability to excel in a specific area. The acknowledgement of the importance of difference and how this can enrich everyone's experience is embedded in the school.

The school has a very well presented and attractive prospectus which clearly outlines the ethos and what children and parents can expect. All the children have a handbook which is also very clear as to what living at the school entails and what the routines, rules and systems are whilst at school. The school also has a website which can be accessed for any information carried within the prospectus.

The size of the boarding operation and the fact that boarding takes place in one part of the building means that the organisation of boarding is consistent and safe. Boys and girls have clearly demarked separate boarding facilities, however the standard of accommodation is very similar.

The staff responsible for boarding provide a good balance of supervision for the children. The supervision of those boarding is discrete and does not impinge on privacy. The level of supervision does vary, bearing in mind the young age of some of the children and their need for guidance and prompting in some areas.

The safety of the children who board is protected by having a robust risk assessment process which is checked by those responsible for the boarding area, the member of staff responsible for health and safety issues and the head teacher. All members of staff liaise with each other on an informal and formal basis. Forums in which meetings are held this includes a works committee in which maintenance and health and safety is discussed, the senior management meeting, boarding staff meeting and the meeting held between the head, proprietor and financial bursar and via staff meetings of which records are kept and distributed.

Records are checked and endorsed by the member of staff responsible for them and are then checked and endorsed by the head teacher. This ensures that the head teacher is very much involved in the oversight and management of the school whilst sharing and delegating responsibilities. Records which the head teacher monitors and endorses include records of punishments, staff recruitment and risk assessments. However at this inspection two gap year students had not been suitably checked regarding safeguarding. The school also has a system which highlights any children which may need additional monitoring and support and this information is disseminated using the school intranet.

There is a comprehensive staff handbook which outlines policies and guidance with regards to boarding and the welfare of children in the school. New members of staff have a clear induction process and this involves training in child protection and the emphasis on duties of care and supervision for those children who board. Currently gap year students do not receive the training session provided by the boarding schools association. The school policies outline who is responsible for reviewing staff performance and training and this is also outlined in each member of staff's job description. Formal supervision is not provided for those working within the boarding house.

The level of communication between all members of staff in the school is excellent. Each child's needs, concerns and idiosyncrasies are known to the staff. The staff team is managed and supported by a senior management team who are experienced and knowledgeable, and who provide excellent oversight of the running of the school.

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 that the safeguarding and child protection guidance covers all areas of recommended practice (NMS3)
- ensure all gap year students undergo full safety checks both at the school and in their country of origin (NMS 38)
- ensure boarding house staff are given formal supervision (NMS 34)
- ensure that gap students have access to boarding school association training (NMS 34)
- ensure the senior management team monitor employment of gap year students and the recruitment process of undertaking safety checks (NMS 8)
- ensure that medical consent forms cover all aspects of treatment (NMS 15)