

Westbourne House School

Inspection report for boarding school

Unique reference number	SC014827
Inspection date	12 May 2009
Inspector	Kevin Whatley
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	15 November 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

Westbourne House School is situated in Shopwyke on the outskirts of Chichester in Sussex. The school provides pre-prep and preparatory education with boarders normally accepted from the age of eight. The boarding provision is currently situated within the main school and in three outhouses located within the same grounds. The school brochure describes the school as wishing to 'stimulate and encourage children to maximise their potential in mind, body and spirit'. At the time of the inspection there were just over 80 boarders, whose ages ranged from eight to 13 years.

Summary

This key announced inspection took place over the course of two days during the school week. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors, one of whom was a Boarding Schools Additional Inspector. Boarders have their healthcare matters met by qualified and experienced staff. Medication matters are generally addressed safely, although not all medicines are stored securely. Boarders benefit from a very high standard of meal provision. Appropriate child protection protocols and practices are in place and staff are suitably trained. The recruitment and checking procedures for staff and those who live at the school are generally complied with, though, due to extreme circumstance, these were not followed on one occasion. Boarders receive excellent individual support, guidance and care and engage in a large variety of activities. Boarders feel they are listened to and are enabled to express their views easily. Boarders live in good standards of accommodation, with the school continuing to implement a programme to improve facilities further. Boarding is seen as vital to the whole school culture being extremely well managed by the headmaster and head of care. The ethos of the school is one of mutual respect and understanding, with boarders flourishing in their education and personal and social development. A number of recommendations were made as a result of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Boarding principles and practices now appear in information for parents, pupils and staff. The complaints procedure has been amended to show the contact details of Ofsted. Boarders are now provided with an induction guide when they first arrive. Staff records have been improved to state the details of checks undertaken before employment. New window restrictors have been fitted where necessary, whilst fire doors now have alarm activated stops. Outdoor lighting has been improved to ensure the safety of boarders.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The medical needs of boarders are well considered and recorded. Healthcare records clearly describe the individual needs of each boarder, including details of any existing issues. Records of treatments or medicines given are completed in daily logs, although this information is often transported between the outhouses and main school by boarders. Protocols are in place to meet particular medical circumstances, which also allow for boarders to take responsibility for their own medication when deemed appropriate and safe. Boarders are suitably educated in personal and social healthcare matters as part of the school teaching curriculum.

Boarders feel they are looked after extremely well when they fall ill. Qualified nursing staff address boarders healthcare needs throughout the school day and provide additional training to matrons. A good number of boarding staff are trained in first aid to ensure a 24 hour first aid and emergency treatment response to incidents and illnesses. As a weekly boarding school, boarders have their routine medical appointments arranged and facilitated by their parents. Parental consents for boarders to receive first aid and medicines are kept on file; these are currently being updated to include opticians and dentists.

The policies and procedures for the storage and administration of medicines are clear and robust, with a majority of medicines being kept safely and securely. However, a basket containing prescribed and non prescribed medication was found to be in one of the outhouses. Records of medicines administered were accurate and up to date.

Boarders receive a very high standard of food provision which they clearly appreciate and enjoy. All boarders have their likes and dislikes considered as part of the menu planning process. Meals are prepared to a high quality, being plentiful, nutritious and well balanced. Staff are mindful to encourage and facilitate healthy eating, with boarders displaying a sound understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet. Fresh produce is used wherever possible, with fresh fruit readily available for boarders back in their houses. Boarders who have special dietary requirements have these properly addressed, such as the need to have gluten or glucose free meals. On occasion special foods are put on to celebrate annual events including Shrove Tuesday and Christmas.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The school adopts a rigorous approach toward addressing matters of bullying. Clear details of the stance taken in regard to such issues are clearly described in the boarders' guide. Staff are mindful of what may constitute bullying, intimidating or upsetting behaviour and are swift to intervene and identify its causes. This can include the involvement of parents when necessary. Boarders felt there were no issues of bullying as such, noting that they get on really well most of the time.

Staff are suitably trained in regards to child protection matters and are supported to attend routine training courses. Gap students undertake appropriate induction and training. Boarders who are also peer counsellors are clearly made aware that they cannot keep any worrying or concerning conversations private. Two designated persons have overall responsibility for safeguarding across the school. Clear protocols and practices are in place to address any matters relating to child protection. Regular liaison occurs with local safeguarding agencies to ensure compliance with Sussex safeguarding procedures. The recording of child protection related issues was found to be in data format; this was subsequently transferred to hard copy during the inspection. No child protection matters involving boarders have been reported since the last inspection.

The use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate. Boarders feel they are treated very fairly, with sanctions being imposed rarely and only when absolutely necessary. The head of care is fully aware of when and how sanctions are given and monitors their imposition closely.

Clear complaints procedures are outlined within information provided to boarders and parents. Such information is also displayed around the school with added contact details for more

independent services including ChildLine and the school's independent listener. The contact details for the welfare inspectorate show the Commission for Social Care Inspection and not Ofsted. No complaints have been reported since the last inspection and none have been received by Ofsted.

Regular and routine fire safety checks and tests are carried out, with boarders understanding how to access the quickest escape route. Fire drills are carried out at least every term and at different times of the day. Fire risk assessments are compiled which highlight areas of potential hazard. Fire exit signage is not always in place, whilst wedges were being used in one instance. A window in a dormitory was also found to have had a restrictor removed and not put back; the school took immediate action to rectify these matters. Staff note repairs within the boarding areas and report them as necessary, although routine tours of the building to identify potential safety hazards do not occur as a matter of course.

Boarders have their privacy suitably respected by staff. Boarders did not raise any concerns that their privacy was compromised throughout the day or night. Staff were observed to knock on bedroom doors and supervise bathing times appropriately.

The required checking of staff and all those who live on site are generally addressed well. New staff employed by the school do not have unsupervised contact with boarders until all the required confirmations have been received. All adults who live on site but who are not employed by the school should also have checks completed. On the one occasion when this was not followed, due to serious staff illness, a strategy and risk assessment was put in place pending the necessary check. Adults who live on the site but are not employed have the terms of their stay, which includes contact with boarders, clearly explained to them prior to moving in, although no written agreement is currently in place.

The school are protected as much as possible from public intrusion. Since the last inspection a new CCTV system has been introduced which covers the main access points to the school, although a policy has yet to be completed.

During free time boarders are able to use other areas of the school in the afternoon and evening such as the music building, main hall and large grounds. The music buildings are currently not locked until late in the evening. Boarders know exactly where the boundaries are and the areas which they are forbidden to use and clearly enjoy playing outside. One of the most popular areas to play is situated a fair distance from any school buildings. Staff supervision of boarders is reasonable during the after school period.

Risk assessments are in place and cover most aspects, although some did not contain a date when they were devised or when they were due for review. Since the last inspection new lighting has been installed to ensure boarders' safety at night.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders have easy access to a considerable number of activities, with a comprehensive evening programme in place. One evening a week is put aside for less structured routines, whilst an activity related trip outside of school is arranged once a month. Westbourne House has a good sporting reputation which is reflected in the types of events and activities. Many boarders pursue their chosen sport after school, taking advantage of the excellent facilities to play

cricket, tennis, hockey, football or go swimming. Boarders who prefer to concentrate on music can use the music hall and practice rooms, whilst the library offers a quieter space to read or make use of the computers. The school is set within extensive grounds which allows boarders the opportunity to play outside on neatly tended lawns or amongst the trees and bushes.

The types of activities boarders choose to take part in are carefully monitored, with every effort made to include them in a variety of activities and team sports. Boarders are enabled to increase their self-esteem through the achievement of captaining teams with those who may not be seen as outstanding being given appropriate opportunities.

Boarders receive outstanding personal care and support. Boarders stated categorically that they are looked after by staff who understand them extremely well and who offer them excellent support, care and guidance. Boarding staff clearly know the boarders in their care and the particular needs they have. Boarders feel they can talk to a number of different people in the school, for instance, a houseparent, matron, teacher, gap student or indeed one of the peer 'friends'. An independent listener is linked to the school; boarders are aware of who they are and how to contact them should they wish. Boarders also belong to tutor groups during the school day where their educational and pastoral needs are discussed. Communication between the school's teaching and boarding staff is clear and obvious, and information relating to boarders is shared when necessary.

There is no evidence to suggest boarders experience any type of discrimination whatsoever. Boarders clearly feel part of the whole school within an atmosphere of inclusion, acceptance and respect prevalent in the culture of the school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

An excellent approach by the school ensures boarders can contribute easily to the operation of boarding. Boarders are seen as a vital part of everyday life at the school with their views, opinions and wishes being actively sought and acted upon. A boarders' survey was recently carried out which led to improvements to accommodation and meal provision and changes to evening activities. It is clear that boarders share a very positive relationship with the people who care for them, with continued open dialogue allowing them to feel listened to and part of the community.

Additional opportunities are available for boarders to engage in more formal communication such as the boarders' forum, in house meetings, and the whole school council. Boarders feel these forums work well, with responses to questions or queries raised being provided in good time.

Boarders have sufficient opportunities to contact their parents and families. The school does not allow pupils to bring mobile phones with them. Boarders can use a number of payphones around the boarding areas and although not particularly private no boarder felt their location was a problem. Boarders can also request to use the phones in reception, the nurse and matron's room and indeed the phones situated in their boarding houses. Parents feel communication between the school and themselves is extremely good, with any relevant matters being made known to them as soon as possible. Being a weekly boarding school, boarders have contact with parents very regularly.

Pupils who wish to board are given every opportunity to experience living away from home for a short period before boarding long term. A majority of boarders were previously pupils in the pre-prep and younger prep school, with boarding seen as a positive rite of passage as pupils get older. The school invite pupils who are interested in boarding to stay between two and five nights prior to agreeing for them to board the following term. Boarders said when they are new to boarding they are linked with an experienced boarder who acts as their buddy until they settle in. New boarders are provided with a very useful guide which explains the rules, expectations and particulars of living at the school.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarders have their possessions and belongings respected. Lockable cabinets are not readily available within dorms although boarders can bring these in from home or have these provided by the school should they wish. Boarders do have lockers available in the changing rooms. Boarders said they had encountered no problems with regard to their possessions being lost or stolen. The school ethos is one of trust and mutual respect and it is one that is clearly endorsed by boarders in relation to each other.

Boarders benefit from accommodation which is generally very good with one particular area being excellent. The main boarding accommodation is situated in the main school building with girls and boys segregated between different floors. Three additional houses are currently used to accommodate the remaining older boarders, these being situated within the school grounds. Boarders are afforded reasonable amounts of personal space, with an adequate number of lounges available for spending free time with their peers. The washing, bathing and toilet facilities were found to be adequate. All areas are in good condition both inside and out with an ongoing programme in place to replenish beds, dormitory furniture and communal spaces.

Throughout the accommodation nice homely touches can be found which make for a family orientated and young person centred environment. Boarders can personalise their own spaces with posters, pictures and photographs. The outhouses in particular provide boarders with a sense of living outside of the main school in a large family home. All of the accommodation is set within the beautiful and extensive school grounds.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

A good level of information is available regarding Westbourne House which includes a clear overview of boarding. In particular, a very clear and detailed prospectus highlights the principles and practices of boarding. Parents and boarders receive thoughtfully developed guides which are updated yearly.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Boarders are drawn from the local area. The staffing team are representative of local demographics, with boarders able to be cared for by male and female staff. Boarders are enabled to mix with different age groups and encouraged to build positive relationships with other boarders not seen as their immediate friends. Boarders have their views listened to and their individual meal choices respected. The close monitoring of activities and team sports ensures all boarders are enabled to feel a sense of achievement irrespective of their own abilities.

It is clear that boarding is held in extremely high regard by the school leadership. Boarding is firmly rooted in school life, being seen as vital to the whole school community. The headmaster and head of care clearly understand and promote the needs of boarders. Staff are subsequently provided with consistent support and guidance to carry out their roles with efficiency and care. The culture of boarding is very positive and clearly assists boarders to flourish in their education and personal and social development.

Records needing to be kept, such as sanctions and risk assessments, are in place, with the head of care clearly aware of all matters relating to boarding. However, some documents were not dated or signed, with no written evidence confirming they had been routinely monitored by a senior member of staff.

The organisation of boarding at the school is facilitated extremely well. Arrangements in the boarding areas ensure girls and boys are segregated appropriately. A majority of boarders stay weekly though some board for a few days at a time. The exact days when part-time boarders will stay are known to all before the term begins, with little or no disruption caused to weekly boarders. Staff are deployed in sufficient numbers during the day and night to meet the boarders' needs. The turnover of boarding staff is very low, with a good balance of male and female staff on duty at any given time. Boarding related policies and practices support staff to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. All boarding staff undertake a relevant induction programme, including gap students. Gap students are well appreciated across the school and enabled to participate fully in the boarding community.

Boarders feel they are cared for particularly well, with parents expressing extremely positive views and opinions. It is clear boarding staff are committed to providing a high standard of support, guidance and care, doing so with thought and sensitivity. The atmosphere within boarding is open, relaxed and nurturing, with an emphasis on being a home to those who stay there.

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 all medicines are stored appropriately and safely in accordance with the school's own policies and procedures (NMS 15.10)
- review the current practice of medication treatment and administration notes being transported by boarders (NMS 7.5)
- ensure the contact details for complaints displayed within the school are amended from the Commission for Social Care Inspection to Ofsted (NMS 5.4)

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- ensure persons living with boarders, but not employed by the school, have the required checks completed and sign a written agreement in respect of the terms of living there (NMS 38.3/39.4)
 - consider contacting the local fire safety department for advice and guidance regarding current fire safety legislation (NMS 26.1)
 - implement a routine monitoring process to check and record all environmental health and safety matters such as windows and fire safety (NMS 47.9)
 - review the staff supervision arrangements of boarders playing in the grounds far away from the main school buildings and the unrestricted access to some buildings during the evening (NMS 47.6)
 - develop a policy concerning the use of CCTV (NMS 41.7)
 - implement a process to record when important logs and risk assessments are monitored (NMS 23.1)