

# Malvern St James

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspection date</b>	13 November 2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Dawn Taylor
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Head / Principal</b>	Rosalind Hayes (Headmistress)
<b>Nominated person</b>	Elaine Drake (Head of Boarding)
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	14 November 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**

Malvern St James is an independent boarding and day school for girls aged four to 18 situated in a designated area of outstanding beauty. In total there are 360 girls in the school, 60% of whom are boarders. The junior school, which is predominantly day, has 50 pupils. Boarders are accepted from age seven.

### **Summary**

This was an announced inspection undertaken by two Ofsted inspectors and a boarding school additional inspector over three days. The inspection looked at the key boarding school national minimum standards under the Every Child Matters outcome groups.

The overall outcome judgement is outstanding. The outcome judgements in being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution and organisation are outstanding. The outcome area for economic wellbeing is judged as good. There are no recommendations being set.

Malvern St James is an outstanding school. Boarders' safety and protection is paramount. Boarders' health and pastoral care is being met by a dedicated team of professional staff who are continually striving to develop the boarding experience and maintain outstanding outcomes for children.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

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

This is the first inspection following the merger of Malvern Girls' College and St James's School.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The promotion of boarders' good health and well being is outstanding. Boarders have access to excellent quality medical treatment and first aid. This results in their health needs being effectively identified and met. The school has an outstanding health centre that is staffed by a team of three registered nurses and two health care assistants. They provide 24 hour nursing cover to the school. In addition there is a general practitioner who holds morning surgery every weekday. Boarders feel that this service is excellent and staff manage health issues sensitively and confidentially. Boarders are well cared for at times of illness or upset and the school is proactive at identifying and managing potential health epidemics. The medical team are effective in communicating appropriate information to relevant staff. Staff working in the boarding houses are qualified in first aid and as a result, boarders health care needs are well managed.

The school has a comprehensive medication policy, procedure and practice guidance that specifically addresses the safe storage and administration of medication and the use of non-prescribed medicines. All medical procedures have been agreed by the school's doctor who works closely with the sister in charge of the health centre. This strengthens the systems in place for staff to identify, address and monitor both the whole school approach to health and the meeting of individual needs.

The school effectively meets its stated aim that boarders become responsible citizens who make a contribution to the society in which they live. Staff actively promote the school's health education policy. Girls are well informed and they become confident individuals and able to lead safe, fulfilling and healthy lives. There is an established personal, social, health education and citizenship curriculum that is supported by boarding staff and the health centre team. Boarders have excellent access to information and guidance with regard to health and social issues in age appropriate formats. This includes specialist external speakers who address personal safety, internet safety and substance abuse among many topics. As a result, boarders are able to make informed decisions and are relaxed, interested and confident when discussing personal, health and social matters.

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to meeting the health, nutrition and well being of boarders and working towards a whole school healthy food approach. Boarders benefit from the school's strong commitment to provide freshly prepared food of a good quality with plenty of choice. The kitchen provides a range of world foods that embraces and represents other cultures and countries. The meals are well presented and a vegetarian and halal option is always available. Boarders' dietary needs are well met by an enthusiastic catering team responsible for the provision and preparation of meals. Members of the catering team are trained in nutrition and food handling. Boarders are regularly consulted through an established food committee and actions are taken as a result.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The system in place to promote the safety and welfare of boarders is outstanding. Boarders commented that they feel safe, secure and protected. They are taught the necessary skills to care for and protect themselves. Boarders are living in a positive and nurturing environment where their welfare is paramount. The routines and structures of boarding life make certain that the boarders are safe at all times. Any threats to their safety are comprehensively eliminated. Staff clearly understand the needs of boarders and how best to safeguard them. Staff build strong positive relationships with the boarders and are very approachable. Boarders know that there are a variety of staff with whom they can share any worries or concerns.

The positive culture of the school is underpinned by a strong value system which emphasises public and personal safety. Child protection concerns at the school are appropriately referred on to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff know the steps to take which are detailed in the school's operational child protection and safeguarding policy. The designated lead for child protection has attended advanced training and this helps to develop the essential skills and knowledge around the latest safeguarding guidance. In addition, the staff, prefects and student peer support group receive regular comprehensive child protection and safeguarding training.

Boarders feel that the school respects their privacy and confidentiality and that their concerns are taken seriously. The school has a strong complaints procedure and information about this is available to boarders and parents through written material and the school's website. Boarders state that the school responds quickly to any concerns raised by them.

Boarders are cared for in a warm, friendly and safe atmosphere. Staff and boarders know that bullying is not tolerated and that staff act on any information that bullying might be taking

place. Boarders did not identify bullying as a problem. Boarders show great respect and regard towards each other and this is fostered and encouraged by staff.

Boarders' behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. Staff understand how to encourage good behaviour, which is actively rewarded and inappropriate behaviour is addressed in a very fair and measured way. There are clear guiding principles to ensure the smooth running of the school community. Boarders understand that the school has high expectations whereby all students are expected to be honest, considerate, courteous and tolerant. Throughout the school day and in the boarding houses they achieve this well. The emphasis placed on caring behaviour, citizenship and positive thinking is reflected throughout the school and boarding houses. A clear behaviour management policy, together with an established structure and opportunities for boarders to be guided to learn good social skills, have a positive effect of creating a harmonious environment in the school.

The school has in place excellent systems and structures to maintain safe practices and fulfil health and safety obligations. Risk assessments for the premises and activities are comprehensive and successfully detail how staff manage risks. Boarders understand that staff are responsible for their safety and acknowledge that staff successfully balance their welfare, while developing their independence and access to an extensive range of activities. Boarders learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they regularly practice the emergency escape drill. In addition staff receive fire awareness training. The leadership team have an excellent overview of health and safety matters, which are regularly reviewed to ensure full compliance. The security and access to boarding houses is very successfully managed and visitors are always checked and signed in and out of the buildings.

The school has in place a robust vetting and selection policy and procedure. The leadership team ensure that staff employed at the school are deemed suitable to work with children. All the necessary checks are completed including an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau check. Members of the leadership team, key managers and the chair of governors have also completed advanced training on safer recruitment practices. As a result, the school has enhanced its stringent procedures.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' experience of enjoying and achieving is outstanding. They clearly enjoy boarding and are involved in all aspects of school life. Boarders benefit enormously from excellent support provided by the boarding staff, external professionals and peers. Pastoral care matters are addressed effectively by staff. Each boarder receives a high level of support that successfully promotes their personal, social and educational development. Boarding permeates throughout the culture of the school and therefore boarders are given a high priority by the school community. Staff work in a very encouraging and supportive manner. Boarders are very clear that there are a range of staff they can go to for personal support and freely initiate interaction. Boarders are also encouraged to share the responsibility for the wellbeing and happiness of others around them through peer support and established school and house prefect teams. Older boarders care for younger and new members of the boarding community, emulating the care they receive from adult members of the school community.

A key strength is the department that provides specialist and dedicated teaching for children requiring learning support including the gifted and talented. There is thorough provision for

any boarder who requires supportive tuition. Screening takes place to evaluate where help is required and this is given on a one-to-one basis with noticeable results. Tuition is available for as long as it is required. English as an additional language is successfully delivered to boarders where English is not their first language.

Boarders' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence is excellent because they are valued within the school community and their contributions and efforts are noticed and rewarded. Boarders readily participate in formal worship and assemblies, which are rooted in the Christian ethos of the school. Participation in musical experiences, appreciation of art and the reading of poetry and literature are key aspects of their spiritual enrichment. Boarders develop an awareness of their own culture and that of others and begin to appreciate cultural diversity through food, assemblies and peers. The school has a chaplain who promotes a multi-faith and inclusive ethos. Outstanding attention is paid to the range of faiths and cultures of boarders who live at the school and enrich the boarding community. The school provides regular services, an established community link for Muslim boarders, a chapel and further spaces for worship, and sources additional places of worship in the community. The school helps the boarders to understand the importance of equality and diversity. Boarders are involved in regular fundraising events and each boarding house raises money for their own charity. Boarders see this as important because it enables them to contribute to their local community and raises their awareness of the needs of others. The school also maintains an established international link with The Gambia where boarders go every two years to undertake community work.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' contribution to the running of the school and boarding houses is outstanding. The school works hard to ensure that the boarders have very good relationships with the staff and this is crucial in allowing boarders to have a voice in their school. The school has a creative approach to canvassing the views and opinions of boarders, parents, staff and significant stakeholders, which has included the use of external auditors, and this is particularly evident with the new plans in place to develop and enhance the boarding provision.

There is an excellent range of channels through which boarders can express their views and feelings. These include the school union, food committee, Information Communication Technology forum and the boarding issues meeting. Boarders understand the purpose of these meetings and value initiatives introduced as a result of them. House meetings meet regularly to discuss any issues relating to boarding and also play a role in planning weekend activities. These meetings support boarders in being part of a mature and developing residential community.

Extensive links with boarders' parents and families are an intrinsic part of the support and development of boarders. From the initial contact with the school, parents remain very well informed and the school works in partnership to achieve the best outcomes for their child. The school values and includes boarders' families and promotes parental contact. Boarders remain in regular contact with their parents and family through phone calls and letter writing. All of the boarding accommodation has wireless facilities so that boarders can also use their webcams on their laptops and email facilities. The school has stringent procedures in place to ensure that boarders use the internet safely. Parents have easy access to key staff. The school operates an effective website which features regular newsletters, information and a parental portal.

A key strength is the introduction and induction of new boarders to the school, which is sensitively managed by boarding staff and sixth form boarders in partnership with parents. The school has regular open days and every potential boarder is offered a trial boarding night. Each new boarder is befriended by a shadow, as well as being given a booklet describing life in each individual boarding house. There are induction days and regular meetings in each house that support new boarders during their first term. This results in new boarders feeling secure and helped to succeed well and become a valued member of the boarding community.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Boarders are provided with good quality accommodation that is comfortable, clean, adequately furnished and well maintained. There are four boarding houses that accommodate year groups of girls. All accommodation is comfortable and welcoming. Sleeping accommodation is of sufficient size and decorated to a high standard. Individual rooms reflect the interests and tastes of the boarders. Boarders have access to toilet and washing facilities that supports their privacy. Boarders expressed great satisfaction with the accommodation provided and are excited about future development plans. Staff fully recognise that it is vital that the buildings are safe and well maintained. Boarders are encouraged to develop a clear sense of belonging by taking great pride in their accommodation and to treat it with respect.

There are a range of facilities on site to which the boarders have access in the evenings and weekends; these include a newly built outstanding sports centre, Astroturf, music centre, art and technology centre, drama theatre workshop and swimming pool. The grounds that surround the school are well maintained and offer the boarder a safe environment in which to relax or pursue sporting activities.

All accommodation is maintained to a good standard by a facilities manager and a team of maintenance, grounds and domestic staff. These are employed by the school, as opposed to external contractors, and are very loyal and knowledgeable in an emergency. The support staff are integral to the school's success.

Going for Gold is a three year strategic plan, which will develop the boarding infrastructure and provide outstanding facilities for the future. In the meantime, the school continues to work to a maintenance and refurbishment programme that ensures all boarding houses continue to be maintained to a good standard. This work demonstrates a continuing commitment by the school to raising standards and promoting boarding.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The management and organisation of the school's welfare and boarding provision is outstanding. The values and ethos of the school are clearly set out for parents, staff and boarders in the statement of boarding principles. This is underpinned by comprehensive staff policies and procedures that enhance professional staff practice. Staff are conscientious and accomplished at managing boarding in a way that best suits the group of boarders in each house. This results in the distinctive identity of each house that support girls to progress through boarding. A clear example of this progressive approach is the independence and trust fostered in the sixth form.



The head of boarding sits on the school's leadership team and plays an integral part in the vision of the school. Her dynamic and visionary approach enhances the boarders' experience. She models exemplary work practice to a team of enthusiastic and energetic staff. Each boarding house has a dedicated team who are made clear of their roles and responsibilities through comprehensive induction, training, supervision and appraisal. They are experienced, skilled and make life fun for boarders. They work cohesively and communicate effectively with the whole staff team. The commitment shown by all departments of the school to boarding, results in holistic, child-centred practice that ensures children have a positive experience of boarding and achieve strong outcomes.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school recognises the uniqueness of each boarder and their individual needs. They successfully encourage girls from different social and cultural backgrounds to work and live together.

The board of governors and leadership team have comprehensive monitoring systems that ensure the quality of care received by boarders is outstanding. This includes a governor with a discrete quality assurance role who visits all boarding houses. The governors and leadership team have a clear overview of boarding's strengths and needs, which ensures boarders are safe and receiving a high quality boarding experience. There is effective monitoring and evaluation of relevant records and events such as the complaints, child protection and discipline logs. Any shortfalls in these areas are identified and addressed very quickly. This quality monitoring contributes to reports to the governing body and the school's overall strategic plan. The school has substantial strengths and has a sustained record of delivering outstanding performance and managing improvement.

## **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**

There are no recommendations.