

St John's Beaumont School

Inspection report for boarding school

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| Inspector | Karen Malcolm / Tola Akinde-Hummel |
| Type of Inspection | Key |

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| Registered person | Society of Jesus |
| Head / Principal | |
| Nominated person | Giles Delaney |
| Date of last inspection | 28 April 2006 |

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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

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| 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

St John's Beaumont school is an independent day and boarding Roman Catholic preparatory school for pupils aged seven to 13. There is also a pre preparatory department for four to six year olds. The school is a Jesuit school. It positively welcomes pupils from all denominations. There are 350 pupils, 60 of whom are full or weekly boarders, which is the full boarding capacity of the school.

The building was especially designed and purpose built as a boarding school in 1888 and is Grade 1 listed.

The new sports complex is now fully operational; including an indoor 30 foot rock climbing wall, fitness suite, two sports halls and performance studio and will be opened by Her Majesty the Queen in October 2009.

Summary

At this announced, full inspection all the key standards were inspected. The outstanding recommendations made at the previous inspections in 2006 and 2006 with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) were also followed up.

The school is well organised. The attention to the welfare of the children and young people that board is paramount. All children and young people know who they can talk to about any issue that might concern them. There are an extensive number of activities that children and young people can participate in. Facilities provided within the school and its grounds encourage study, promote positive relationships, foster personal and leisure interests and respect privacy. Children and young people enjoy their experience of living and learning at the school and value the opportunity to contribute to the schools ethos and community.

Overall the school remains and provides a caring, supportive environment for those that board. The staff work together, within a clear management structure, to promote and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people. Children and young people reported that they felt safe, happy and are listened to.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were eight recommendations from two previous inspections conducted by the CSCI. The registered person was asked to ensure that the child protection policy is updated and to obtain a copy of the up-to-date version of the local County Council Multi-Agency Child Protection procedures. The records of routine administration of medication are to be monitored and the showering arrangements are to be reviewed. Additional to this the recruitment procedures for catering staff are to be followed and staff application, curriculum vita and references are completed and held on file.

Following this inspection seven recommendations have been fully met. The one recommendation not fully complied with relates to the school recruitment procedures regarding obtaining all references required under the standards.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The health needs of children and young people are catered for in a professional, thoughtful, and proactive manner. The staff team are dedicated, always available and know children and young people well. Children and young people both commented on surveys and during discussions that they know they can go to matron if they are unhappy or unwell and that they are always well looked after. The personal, social and health education programme is an integral part of the school curriculum. An excellent example of good practice seen was the standard of care forms which had been completed for pupils with acute asthma or severe allergies. There is clear monitoring and reviewing of this system by the matrons. The school doctor is not only available for surgery once a week but is also available for professional guidance, consultation and on-call emergencies. The relationship with the school and the school doctor is excellent. The school doctor is also involved in the recruitment process of new matrons. All medication is kept securely locked in the infirmary and regular stock checks are taken. Medication administration records were appropriately completed and all the matrons knew the children and young people well. Children and young people are supervised appropriately and looked after when ill and there are clear procedures on how this is managed.

Each day children and young people have a cooked breakfast, a cooked lunch with vegetarian choices, afternoon snack and a cooked supper with a salad buffet and a variety of desserts. A bowl of fresh fruit is provided on each table at each meal. Water dispensers are situated near to the dormitories and during the day water bottles are given. At weekends children and young people are allowed to eat any tuck they may have bought within reason. The quality of the food is high and there is always sufficient for second helpings. Menus take into account individual's allergies, their cultural needs and any special diets of the children and young people. The availability of foods that is familiar to children and young people include the purchase of chilli sauces and spices for those who are used to a spicier menu. Children and young people are provided with high quality food, subject to rigorous checks to ensure consistency in presentation and quality. Children and young people value the variety of food on offer and confirm that there is always plenty to eat. The food committee, although established last term is not up and running for this term. There are plans to restart this with the induction of 'Night of the Nations'. The dining hall is adequate in size and enables children and young people to eat in a pleasant and comfortable environment. Comments from children and young people surveyed said that 'school provides generally good food and drinks; it also provides a salad bar and a fruit basket. Throughout break times snacks are not as good as they could be, but overall I think the food is good. Also dinners are fun with Mexican nights and Chinese nights.'

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There is a staff recruitment process and checks undertaken by school to ensure children and young people are safeguarded at all times. There were gaps identified with regards to verification of second references. However, the school had undertaken additional verbal checks prior to employment. All staff are subject to a criminal records bureau check and evidence could be seen files. Recruitment records of the contracted catering staff are now available.

Children and young people are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises and all visitors are given ID badges.

The school's policy on bullying is clear and accessible to children, young people and their parents/guardians. Access to further information can be obtained through the school website. Children and young people understand the school's message on anti-bullying. Those spoken to believe the school manages bullying effectively and also state there is a variety of people within the school to turn to should they encounter bullying.

Staff could recognise and take appropriate action in the case of suspected child abuse. The school has a designated Child Protection Liaison Co-ordinator (CPLC) and a liaison officer who is a member of the school's governors. The emphasis on promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children and young people and this is threaded throughout the policies and procedures. Child protection training is provided for all the staff employed. There is very clear advice on what actions staff should take if they have any concerns relating to child protection. A pocket sized laminated card contains child protection information and is given to everyone working with the school. The school website also gives the parents and guardian a link to the local county council information website if further advice is needed.

The behaviour management policy and procedure is regarded by children and young people as fair. All behaviour management strategies adopted in the school are well known to the children, young people and their parent and guardians. The emphasis is on the recognition and appreciation of good behaviour. The officials (prefects) knew their roles and responsibilities and do not have any disciplinary powers. Children and young people are polite, courteous and respond to staff instructions. Staff interact and engage children and young people appropriately.

The headmaster promotes an open culture in the school and this can be seen in the range of measures put in place to provide children and young people and their parents with opportunities to express their views, for example an annual questionnaire issued to parents and the headmaster also holds a weekly surgery. The complaints procedure is included in the Family Handbook, as is the worry procedure. The worry procedure is produced in six languages and is provided to the child or young person in their first language. In addition they have various avenues to express their dissatisfaction in relation to any aspects of their boarding experience. Should the headmaster be unable to resolve the complaint, the complaint panel will be convened to hear the complaint independently. There are no records of complaints made to the school in relation to boarding. Children and young people are aware of how to complain if they have any concerns and felt there were a number of people they could turn to and that they would be listened to. The CPLC was highlighted as someone they would be happy to contact and talk to.

Children and young people enjoyed a sufficient amount of privacy. There are two large dormitories, which are identical in their provision. One generally houses the younger boys and the other the older boys. The use of the bathing facilities is organised so as to provide appropriate age separation and a degree of privacy. There are several telephones situated within the boarding areas for making private telephone calls. There are several places within the school for children and young people to spend free time together or have time alone without unwanted intrusion. School is via a security code which is known only to the pupils and staff and this is changed each term to ensure security is maintained.

Children and young people use the schools computers and internet facility for study, are satisfactory safeguarded for internet safety.

Boarding accommodation is reserved for the use of those boarders designated to use it, and protected from access by the public.

Children and young people live in an environment where all necessary precautions are taken to minimise the risk of fire. Fire evacuations are undertaken at the beginning of each term. There is clear evidence of this. Therefore new boarders can become familiar with the procedures. However the times of each evacuation carried out was not consistently recorded. Changes to procedure following an evacuation were not updated on the evacuation guidelines or the fire risk assessment. The school has a current fire risk assessment is satisfactory and fire instruction notices are displayed. However, this policy has not been updated since 2007. Areas such as the dormitories and shower facilities are not fully covered in the document. The fire risk assessment was up to date. All activities whether at home or aboard are appropriately assessed to ensure all areas of risk are minimise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is an emphasis on enabling children and young people to enjoy and achieve in education, learning and leisure activities and this is continually demonstrated throughout the day time and evening programmes. The school also has an excellent range of activities available to children and young people. There is a new system for booking activities on-line and this has been useful in organising the terms activity programme. There is a large playroom with table tennis tables, a flat screen TV and DVD player to use in free time. There is also a wide selection of board games and a library with access to a well-equipped computer room, which can be used with staff supervision. There are planned trips each weekend and one of the matrons is always available as the group's first aider. Children and young people spoken with were appreciative of the range of activities available to them.

The school's independent listener is also employed as a part time teacher therefore is not independent of the school. The independent listener spoken to said that boarding children and young people do not use this service as much because they have several other avenues within the school to obtain this support. The children's surveys indicated that a majority of the boarders felt that there was an adult in the school that they could talk to.

The staff are sensitive to individual needs race, religion and disability. This enables children and young people to remain in an environment that explores and addresses their cultural differences. Although the school is a practicing Catholic school they are accepting of different cultures and religions. A number of the documents available for parents and guardians are also produced by the school in different languages and these can be access through the school's website.

Young people have adequate amounts of free time each day alongside more organised activities. Children and young people spoken to said that they are happy with the amount of free time they have, but they also liked keeping busy. There is suitable and reasonably quiet provision for both organised prep and boarders' private study, either in or nearby the main school accommodation.

The school has a new state of the art gym which houses an indoor 30 foot rock climbing wall. The common room is comfortable. There is a wide range of activities children and young people can pursue.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and young people are able to share their views and opinions formally through different forums. However, there is no formal system in place for children and young people to contribute their views about boarding, due to the term starting a few weeks ago, but there are clear plans to restate this.

Children and young people can contact their parents freely. There are several telephones in the boarding area for children and young people to use and there is good access to email facilities. There was also a clear postal arrangement in place. Staff do contact parents regarding welfare issues and there was evidence from children and young people that parental visits to the school are facilitated. Helpline numbers such as Child-line are posted near all telephones.

Children and young people felt they were looked after very well when they were new to the school. There is a very comprehensive Family Handbook for parents and guardians that is sent out prior to children's arrival. The school's website also gives parents and guardians and prospective children and young people a comprehensive list of information and this is updated regularly. Children and young people enjoy a helpful atmosphere from both staff and other more experienced boarders.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Good systems exist to distributing pocket money and looking after personal possessions for boarders. A proper written record is maintained. Each boarder has a suitably secure, accessible place to keep personal possessions and valuables.

The boarding accommodation was seen to meet the standard. Cleanliness is given a high priority and all areas seen were suitably maintained and furnished. Privacy is provided in large dormitories by partitions to provide a degree of privacy. Each cubicle is furnished appropriately. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their cubicles. However, one of the dormitories was deemed more homely than the other and vacant cubicles were being used for additional storage.

Sufficient toilet and washing facilities are provided. There is a toilet close to each dormitory for night-time use. Washing facilities are used by pupils of similar age at the same time.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school has a clear mission statement and a detailed and informative prospectus which includes a section on boarding and accurately describes the service provided. The boarding staff duty roster is available and gives a clear account of staff on duty. There is a high ratio of staff to children and young people at all times. Staff are well dispersed and organised providing ample opportunity for the children and young people to engage with adults if they so chose. During the night there is adequate staffing to ensure there is cover in the event of an emergency.

Since the beginning of term there have been a number of new appointments including the housemaster and mistress. There are job descriptions in the staff handbook, which accurately reflect the duties of all staff. The induction programme as outlined by staff members, including GAP year students was thorough and included briefings on child protection. As a majority of the boarding staff are new in post, no appraisals have been undertaken. Staff in discussion confirm that they are well supported and are very clear on the ethos of the school.

The headmaster monitors records of punishment, complaints and accidents.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Evidence supports a consistent commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. The ethos of the school promotes an positive understanding towards equality and diversity, which is threaded throughout the school, policies and procedures and the way individuals are treated. For example children and young people are mixed at lunch tables to ensure a range of cultures and first languages, thus avoiding small pockets of children and young people becoming too reliant upon each other.

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 staff recruitment is fully compliant with the requirement of the national minimum standard. (NMS38)
- risk assess all areas used by boarders. (NMS47)
- appoint an independent listener who is outside of the boarding and teaching staff of the school (NMS14)
- record the actual times of each evacuation drill undertaken. (NMS26)
- pursue appropriate storage facilities that does not impact on the living conditions of boarders. (NMS42)