

The Prebendal School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Roy Bega
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Registered person	Dean and Chapter of Chichester Cathedral
Head / Principal	Timothy Richard Cannell
Nominated person	The Very Reverend N Frayling
Date of last inspection	4 May 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

Prebendal Cathedral School is a co-educational day/boarding school for children aged seven to 13 years located in the grounds of Chichester Cathedral. It also has a linked pre-prep day school for younger children. The school is based upon Christian values and has strong links with Chichester Cathedral.

The Prebendal School has been the choir school of Chichester Cathedral for well over five hundred years. It provides education and boarding for the choristers who help to maintain the choral tradition in the daily round of worship. Boarding provision is also available to other pupils, boys and girls from the ages of eight to 13 years with the options of weekly, flexi or one night sleepovers.

Boarding provision is located within the original building of the school and can accommodate up to 40 boarders. Dormitories are suitably separated by age and gender with resident staff accommodation located to provide overnight supervision.

Summary

This key announced inspection took place over two days conducted by one inspector. During this time, the inspector met with groups of boarders and day pupils, including the school council/boarders' forum and head pupils. Discussions took place with a range of staff and external professionals not directly employed by the school. A wide range of records were examined and practices observed. A total of 49 boarders and 22 parents completed surveys were received for the purpose of this inspection.

Healthcare provision at the school is good, and is provided by a team of matrons who play an important part in the pastoral care of boarders.

Boarders at the school get on extremely well with one another, they do not view bullying as a problem and the general standard of behaviour is excellent.

Boarders are suitably protected from harm through rigorous recruitment procedures, arrangements for managing risk in providing a safe physical environment and a sound understanding across the school in safeguarding children.

Individual support for boarders is excellent with positive communication between the school and parents. The school council and boarders forum enables pupils to have an active voice within the school.

The boarding accommodation is located within the original building of the school and has recently been redecorated to a good standard. Work completed has included additional shower facilities.

The school provide excellent written information for boarders and their parents. Comprehensive policies and procedures underpin the school's practice which includes good provision for recording and monitoring matters in relation to the welfare of boarders.

Leadership and management are excellent. The staff group are extremely supportive of one another and operate very effectively as a team for the benefit of boarders.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection was undertaken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in May 2004. Six recommendations and one advisory recommendation were made. There are no recommendations outstanding.

Pupils have access to two independent listeners/councillors who they contact directly about personal problems and concerns at school.

A suitable written crises management plan is in place and reviewed annually

Parental permission for the administration of first aid and non prescription medication is obtained

Pupils are able to contact parents, relatives and friends in private

A development plan is in place for the redecoration and refurbishment of boarding areas

A school council and a boarders forum are actively operational for all pupils

A written equal opportunities policy and guidance are in place in relation to anti discrimination practices

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There is good provision at the school in relation to health promotion and health education. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive personal, social, and health education programme. There is good collaboration with the school's safeguarding officer, matrons and catering manager with regards to input with the programme. The school provides a well balanced diet for pupils, there is plenty of choice at mealtimes and healthy eating is encouraged.

A team of matrons provide 24 hour health cover for boarders during term time. All of the matrons are qualified in first aid and they have undertaken a variety of training courses between them that are relevant to the health needs of boarders. This includes a course related to anaphylactic shock and the use of epi-pens, and others concerning asthma and sports injuries. The school's matrons are viewed as forming a crucial part of the school's pastoral care provision and are easily contactable by boarders both during the day and night.

Established systems are in place for obtaining relevant information about the health needs of boarders. There is effective monitoring and recording of illnesses, accidents, injuries, and other health related matters. Matrons are sensitive to the demands placed on choristers and contribute to the pastoral meetings to monitor their welfare. The school benefits from a very good relationship with the local surgery who provide advice and emergency cover. Majority of boarders remain registered with their own GP and parents retain responsibility for routine health appointments.

There is good communication between parents and the school's matrons in relation to health matters. Medication is stored securely within the matron's surgery. Policies and procedures relevant to the management and administration of medication provide suitable safeguards for the welfare of boarders. Medication records however are not individualised in accordance with the Handling of Medicines in Social Care document.

Healthy eating is integral to the school's health promotion. Good links between school staff and the catering manager ensure specialist dietary requirements are met both for health and cultural needs. Boarders have all their meals in the main school dining room which is planned for refurbishment.

During the visit the inspector joined pupils for meals. They readily voiced their approval with regards to the quality, quantity and choice of food provided. Week-end boarders especially commented on the little extra culinary delights provided for them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The boarding community is an inclusive environment where boarders get on remarkably well with one another and bullying is not viewed as an issue. Clear policies and procedures to protect pupils are in place. These are fully understood by staff who receive safeguarding of children training as part of their induction and thereafter annually.

The school provides a safe and secure environment for boarders within which they are suitably protected from harm. Comments received from boarders include, "We are like a family here and look out for each other". The designated person for safeguarding children has attended training with the local authority and co-ordinated an audit of the school's procedures to ensure they meet current legislation and guidance. There is close co-operation with the cathedral staff who take responsibility for the choristers when they are practising and performing. A chorister tutor is assigned to advocate for them and promote their welfare by maintaining good communication between the school, the cathedral and parents. There is a school governor with designated responsibilities for the protection of the pupils. Management acknowledge the independent listeners/councillors and school's ancillary staff would benefit from appropriate training in the safeguarding of children.

The school provides excellent information for boarders in relation to rules and routines, and also makes clear the expectations in terms of their behaviour and the consequences for misbehaving. There is a strong emphasis within the school on good manners and consideration for others. Boarders consider the school rules to be fair and to be fairly applied by staff. There have been no recorded incidents of major punishments.

Boarders and their parents are made aware of the school's complaints procedures, which includes the contact details for Ofsted. Positive pupil staff relationships and excellent systems for expressing views and opinions, contribute to an environment where any concerns or problems are dealt with effectively at an early stage.

There is excellent provision at the school for managing risk and providing a safe environment for boarders, which includes a comprehensive crisis management plan. There are clear policies and procedures in relation to health and safety. Extremely good systems for monitoring and reviewing written risk assessments in relation to the environment and activities undertaken by

boarders, both on and off site are also in place. The fire safety arrangements at the school are deemed to be satisfactory by the relevant fire authority. Internal checks and tests are carried out as required. Boarders are suitably aware of the school's fire evacuation procedures which are practised on a regular basis. Management acknowledges the need to adjust the automatic lighting system on stair wells and corridors to permit adequate lighting at night.

Robust recruitment and selection procedures reinforce the school's proactive attitude in keeping children safe. All staff are subject to enhanced criminal record bureau (CRB) checks prior to commencing employment. Gap students are currently not being CRB checked but are providing police certificates from their country of origin and written references. Visitors to the school are suitably monitored and there is no unsupervised access to the boarding accommodation by unchecked adults.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Boarders enjoy positive relationships with the staff caring for them and have a wide range of adults who they go to for support with personal problems or concerns. The pastoral system works extremely well. The team of matrons provide excellent support in relation to boarders' welfare and the school has two independent listener/counsellors, whose contact details are provided for boarders. Some examples of comments received from boarders via pupil surveys include, 'Everyone is friendly', 'everyone is kind', 'all the teachers are very caring', 'I get on well with all members of staff', 'everyone is like family'. Similar comments were received from boarders during the course of the inspection.

Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination. The quality of boarding provides a stimulating and vibrant environment whilst taking into account individual and sensitive needs. Boarders benefit from a whole school approach and commitment to equal opportunities. This is reflected in documentation and practice. The school provides an exceptional service in meeting diverse needs.

Boarders make good use of the common room which includes a television, games consoles, board games and DVDs for entertainment. In fine weather the boarders enjoy playing in the school grounds and undertake weekend trips to local attractions and events which are very popular. Many boarders report how they like boarding using the words 'fun' and 'friendly' to describe it. The choristers have busy schedules practicing and performing their singing in the cathedral and wider community which includes the band of the Royal Marines based in Portsmouth and Chichester Theatre. They also enjoy the opportunity to take part in activities and use the facilities in the boarding house in their free time. During the visit several pupils who do not board commented that they would like the opportunity to do so.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Consultation with pupils is integral to how the school operates and there are a number of ways in which they contribute their views and opinions. There is a school council, a boarding forum, a food committee and a suggestion box; all of which contribute to providing pupils with a voice within the school. Boarders are positive about the systems in place and feel their views are appropriately taken into consideration.

Whilst mobiles are not permitted boarders have good access to maintain contact with parents through email, a pay telephone and a direct line in the matrons' office. The school maintains good contact with parents over any areas of welfare and provide very good communication with a weekly bulletin, through the website and notice boards. Parents report they receive good communication from the house parents and are able to visit during term time. A child friendly handbook is provided to all new boarders which is well written and decorated with colour and pictures, it also includes top tips from the boarders. Taster days are offered for prospective new boarders including the chance to experience staying in a dormitory where a buddy will be allocated to welcome them and help them join in with boarding life.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Appropriate systems are in place for receiving, recording, securing and distributing boarders' pocket money. Possessions and valuables are kept secure. Boarders are provided with suitable facilities for the safekeeping of personal possessions.

The boarding accommodation is located within the original building of the school and has recently been redecorated to a good standard. Work completed has included additional shower facilities. Members of the boarding forum report they were involved in the decision making process for this work to be completed.

Boarders personalise their space with posters duvet covers and accessories. Currently junior girls have to go through senior girl boarders sleeping accommodation at night to use bathroom facilities. Discussions with the girls however deemed this as not being a problem. School management are focusing on possibilities in providing more suitable arrangements. Separate shower and toilet facilities are provided for staff and visitors.

Dormitories are suitably separated by age and gender. Boarders report being together in a dorm is fun and confirm there is a homely, family atmosphere. It is acknowledged however that the common room requires redecorating and new furniture.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school provides clear and comprehensive information for boarders and their parents, including a boarder's handbook produced in a child friendly format. Documentation clearly describes the schools aims for pupils, and places a strong emphasis on the school being a community with boarding as an integral element. Boarders benefit from an environment where there is excellent communication amongst the school staff and close monitoring of events relating to their welfare. Weekly meetings take place involving all staff and the school's head reports once a term to the governing body.

Leadership and management within the school are excellent. The Head teacher and Head of Care are actively involved with the day to day welfare and needs of all pupils and are accessible to the staff team. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of boarders, working well as a team across the school ensuring high standards of pastoral care are delivered. Levels of staffing are appropriate and boarders are able to contact a member of staff at all times.

Effective systems are in place to monitor the safety and wellbeing of boarders with clear record keeping and effective lines of communication across the school. Staff confirm they receive formal supervision and are satisfied with the quality and provision of training for professional development. Excellent induction processes are in place for staff including gap students.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good overall, but there are outstanding aspects. The school is proactive in engaging pupils in a very wide range of initiatives and learning experiences. This is facilitated both on and off site. Extra curricular activities are encouraged. This enables pupils to participate in local events, including cathedral activities and charitable events. All pupils benefit from a comprehensive Personal, Social and Health Education programme. This includes key topics such as cultures, environment, wellbeing and preparation for moving on. The school excels in meeting pupils' diverse needs.

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):

- improve the procedure for the administering of medication by introducing daily individual pupil record sheets in accordance with the document, The Handling of Medicines in Social Care
- ensure the independent listeners/councillors and school's ancillary staff receive appropriate safeguarding of children training
- ensure the automatic lighting system is adjusted in the boarding areas to provide adequate lighting on stairs and corridors at night