

# Sutton Valence School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspection date</b>	12 October 2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Alex Turner
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Registered person</b>	United Westminster Schools Foundation
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Bruce Grindlay
<b>Nominated person</b>	James Selwyn Davies
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	6 October 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

The school provides boarding for up to 154 pupils. There are two boarding houses each accommodating up to 50 male pupils, a girls only boarding house for up to 38 pupils and a mixed gender unit for up to 16 pupils aged between 11-13. Boarding is arranged on a fulltime, weekly and flexible basis.

### Summary

This was an announced inspection. Each of the outcomes groups has been judged. All of the key standards have been assessed. The school promotes the welfare, safety and rights of boarders. Boarders benefit from health promotion, good catering arrangements and very good health care services. Boarders are protected from harm. Good risk management enables opportunities and activities. Boarders have good access to a wide range of activities and social events in the evenings and at weekends. They have a voice within the school and are able to contribute to and influence change. The standard of the boarding accommodation is good and outstanding in some areas. The organisation and management of boarding is child centred, efficient and it engages positively in the process of practice review and development.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection of the school by Ofsted. There was a visit on 6th October 2005 by the previous inspectorate to which the report concludes that '... that no additional recommended actions have been made as a result of this visit. It was very positive to find clear evidence to demonstrate the implementation of your action plan, which has led to positive improvements to the school's boarding provision'.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Boarders health is promoted. The school has and follows, an appropriate policy on countering major risks to health, including substance abuse. Personal, social and health education provides age appropriate advice and guidance across a range of topics including alcohol, smoking, sex education, and protecting oneself from abuse. Pastoral care supports boarders to make positive choices and be active in managing personal health care needs.

First aid and minor illness treatment are available to boarders at all times, with access to medical, dental and optical services as required. Boarders benefit from a well managed nurse led school medical centre. Boarders report a high level of satisfaction with the schools sanatorium and health care staff. There is an effective working partnership between the school, the local medical centre and visiting school medical officer. Older boarders can choose whether or not they are accompanied by staff when being seen by the doctor or dentist. Boarders are able to see either a male, or a female, doctor as the boarder chooses. Prescribed medication is given in accordance with the prescription or instructions from the pharmacy. Non-prescription 'household' medicines such as mild pain relief are managed in line with guidance from the schools nurse. Communication between matrons and the school nurses is good though procedures to share information about the administration of pain relief could be better. Boarders keeping and administering their own

medication are assessed by staff as sufficiently responsible to do so, and are able to store their medication safely. A written school record is kept of all medication, treatment and first aid administered to boarders. This is regularly monitored by an appropriate designated senior member of staff.

Nearly three quarters of boarders report they are satisfied with the catering arrangements. Each of the boarding houses has a kitchen for preparing snacks, drinks and sometimes hospitality for friends and visitors. The kitchens are kept clean. Food hygiene is maintained. Boarders are asked for their opinions and these are taken into account by the catering team and at a local level in the boarding houses. Improvements have been noted in some areas. The arrangements for the lunch time sitting are currently under review. This may enhance the dining experience and reduce queuing times. Healthy eating is promoted with a good range and variety in the eating options provided.

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

The provision is good.

Effective action is taken to prevent bullying and to respond to observed or reported bullying. Boarders describe an open, friendly and helpful atmosphere and culture. They said that there are many people, ranging from their peers to the headmaster who they could go to with concerns. Parents, boarders and staff report very few incidents of bullying. They do not identify bullying as a problem at the school. Boarders who may bully others are given suitable help and guidance. Boarders are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and benefit from development opportunities. Boarders who are being bullied are also suitably supported.

The school has and follows, an appropriate policy on child protection and response to allegations or suspicions of abuse. This is available to staff and adults working at the school. All staff, at all levels, have been given briefing or training on responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse and know what action they should take in response to such suspicions or allegations. Practice is overseen and managed by a suitably trained and competent designated child protection coordinator. Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures. There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff working with boarders. Terms of occupancy for adults not employed by the school but living with boarding staff on site are to be reviewed in line with the standards. This will help improve the safeguards already in place.

Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate. The standards of behaviour are good. Boarders identify the school's use of punishments as fair. Boarders report few sanctions and disciplinary issues. They said that issues are talked through so in general situations do not escalate. Acknowledgements for good behaviour are frequent and meaningful. Practice is consistent between houses. The suitably restricted disciplinary powers of prefects are defined. Where necessary prefects are reminded of these limits.

Boarders are protected from the risk of fire and other safety hazards. Sleeping, living and recreational areas are kept free of significant hazards to boarder safety. There is an effective system of risk assessment to identify and reduce risk to boarders. Boarders and boarding staff are aware of emergency evacuation procedures from boarding accommodation. Fire drills and routine tests are regularly carry out.

Boarders accommodation is distinct, and secure from public intrusion. Sleeping areas and living areas are for the exclusive use of boarders other than by reasonable invitation of boarders designated to use those areas. Suitable measures are in place to prevent unauthorised access by the public to boarding houses and other school buildings used by boarders.

Boarders' personal privacy is respected. There is cooperation and respect between boarders with regard to each others need for privacy within the shared living arrangements. Staff supervision of boarders is accessible and present whilst remaining unobtrusive.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders have access to an excellent range and choice of activities outside teaching time. Easy access after school and at weekends to many of the schools facilities is a major benefit of boarding. Boarders keep to busy schedules though also have sufficient free time each day. Supervised evening and weekend activities are arranged. Boarders are very much involved and help choose and plan these events. Access and use of internet facilities is well managed. Boarders also benefit from the provision of good quality TV, audio and games equipment.

Boarders enjoy excellent relationships with boarding staff. There are members of staff to whom boarders can turn to for personal guidance or with a personal problem. The personal tutor system functions effectively. Boarders personal issues are considered important and are properly addressed. There is a clear framework for the exchange of information about pastoral care and welfare needs between boarding staff, teaching staff and the medical centre. Boarders also have access to a counsellor should they prefer to speak with someone independent of the school about any personal issues. The school supports boarders who for any reason do not 'fit in' to the school, house or pupil body. Peer mentoring and support is provided in an individualised and informal way.

The school promotes equal opportunities. There is no discrimination on grounds of gender, disability, race, religion, cultural background, linguistic background, sexual orientation or academic or sporting ability. These factors are taken into account in the care of boarders, so that care is sensitive to different needs. Minority groups amongst boarders are supported appropriately and helped to integrate. The school is culturally sensitive and support is provided for boarders for whom English is not their first language. Policy development in terms of promoting diversity for example the provision for boarders with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs is to be considered.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders contribute to the operation of boarding in the school. They have opportunity to contribute their views to influence change. Boarders are able to express views on relevant aspects of boarding provision formally and informally. They are able to do so either directly or through representatives. These views are taken into account in the development and practice of boarding.

Boarders can contact their parents and families in private. Contact with parents and visits by parents are facilitated within the school. Boarders have access to telephones, the internet and emails to contact parents in private at reasonable times without having to seek permission

from, or inform, staff. Parents are kept informed about any significant welfare concerns relating to their child at school.

There is process of induction and guidance for new boarders. New boarders are given suitable information about boarding routines and rules, including key information in writing. There are arrangements for new boarders to have guidance from more experienced boarders.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Boarders' possessions and money are protected. Reasonable protection is provided for boarders' personal possessions and for any boarders' money or valuables looked after by the school. Boarders are encouraged to develop their financial management skills. For those that do not operate a bank account there is a suitable system for distributing pocket money.

Boarders are provided with a good standard of accommodation. Boarding houses are kept clean. The décor and the furniture and fittings help create a warm homely environment where boarders enjoy spending their time.

Furniture, fittings and equipment are generally free from breakages and from numerous or significant items requiring maintenance. The efficacy of arrangements to complete scheduled improvements to boarding houses prior to the start of the academic year is to be reviewed.

Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation. Sleeping accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of boarders accommodated, with appropriate separation

between genders, age groups and from accommodation for adults. Boarders can if they wish personalise an area of their dormitory with suitable posters and personal items. Requests from boarders to change bed or dormitory for good reasons are properly considered.

Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities. Showers, bathrooms, and toilets are

clean and adequately ventilated. They are distributed within boarding accommodation to provide reasonable access from both sleeping and living areas. Boarders do not report any unacceptable waiting times for toilet and washing facilities at peak times.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Promotion of equality and diversity is good and its impact is also good. There is a suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice. The statement is up to date and is made available to parents, prospective parents, staff and boarders. The statement reasonably reflects the actual current boarding practice at the school. The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare. The organisation of boarding houses operate satisfactorily and provides appropriate protection and separation of boarders by age and gender. No individual house or houses have significantly poorer physical provision, facilities or standards of welfare than other houses. There is no discrepancy of quality of boarding provision for different genders.

Each boarding house has unique characteristics though share the same principles and practice of boarding.

Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders’ welfare. Practice is monitored. Issues requiring action are identified. Action is taken to reduce risks identified by risk assessments and consider any concentration or trend in recorded incidents. Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, and with induction and continued training. The induction training programme for all staff, includes guidance

on child protection. There is an appropriate process for the regular review of the performance of each

member of staff with boarding duties. Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice. Staff with boarding duties are provided with up to date written guidance on the school’s boarding policies and practice. The topics covered include safeguarding and promotion of boarders’ welfare; child protection, anti-bullying, and responding to boarders’ personal problems.

## 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 the schools practice on providing personal health care support is reflected in the written guidance and policy statements available to boarders, staff and parents. (NMS 6.2)
- review the procedures for boarding staff and the school nurses to share information about the administration of pain relief. (NMS 15.1)
- review the schools policy in relation to promoting diversity for example the provision for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs is to be considered. (NMS 18.5)
- ensure there is a written agreement with any adult not employed by the school but permitted to live in the same building as boarding accommodation which covers the points specified in the standard. (NMS 39.4)
- review and improve the arrangements to complete scheduled work to boarding houses. (NMS 40.1)