

# Moulsford Preparatory School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Christopher Garrett
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	23 January 2008

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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

Moultsford Preparatory School is located in a rural location in South Oxfordshire approximately four miles south of Wallingford. The school is for boys and has nearly 200 day pupils. There is a small boarding provision which can accommodate a maximum of 36 boarders. There is one boarding house located on two floors of the main school building. The accommodation comprises of a common room, games room, toilet and shower facilities and six dormitories. The number of boarders varies across the school year with day pupils taking the opportunity to sample boarding, this is especially true in the summer term when the boarding house is at it fullest. The boarding accommodation is satisfactory with plenty of recreational activities being provided. The boarding house has a good staffing structure, with sufficient numbers of staff being available at all times to meet the needs of the boarders.

### Summary

The purpose of this visit was to conduct an announced key inspection of the boarding provision. During the inspection all of the key national minimum standards for boarding schools were inspected. Some additional standards were also inspected.

The overall standard of care for the boarders is good. The outcome groups relating to staying safe and making a positive contribution are assessed and judged as outstanding. The outcome groups for being healthy, enjoying and achieving and organisation are assessed and judged as good. The outcome group for achieving economic well-being is assessed and judged as satisfactory.

Boarders enjoy boarding and identify personal benefits from having a boarding experience. Boarders comment on there being a lot for them to do and enjoying spending time with their friends. Boarders enjoy the structure of their day and the good balance between work and play. Boarders comment on being able to get more work done at school than at home. Boarders have access to an outstanding range of activities during their free periods. These are supervised by experienced and qualified members of staff.

The boarders enjoy a good relationship with staff and their fellow boarders. They feel well supported and express their confidence in being able to talk to staff about any concerns or issues that they have. The boarders are cared for by a dedicated and committed boarding team who take an interest in them.

The boarder's safety and security is a priority within the school. The staff and the school take positive steps to ensure that this is maintained and for finding ways to improve this outcome for the boarders. All staff are aware of the roles and responsibilities in keeping the boarders safe. Practice is well supported by training and a comprehensive range of policies and procedures.

An outstanding aspect of the school is its commitment to listening and consulting with the boarders. This enables boarders to affect change and make their views and opinions known.

Since the last inspection the number of boarders being accommodated at the school has been reduced. This has had an impact on the space available in the larger dormitories. Boarders are looking forward to the scheduled refurbishment of the dormitories.

At the time of the inspection there were 15 to 18 boarders resident at the school. A group of boarders were away on a field trip. All of the boarders contributed their views to this inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

The school has been proactive and addressed a number of the recommendations made following the last inspection.

The school was asked to review the arrangements for the security and storage of medicine and cleaning materials. A new medical room with better facilities has been allocated to the matrons. Medication is kept within a lockable safe within a lockable cabinet. A fridge that is used to store some medication has been fitted with a lock. All cleaning materials are stored inside lockable cabinets. These measures help to ensure the safety of the boarders.

The school was recommended to review its fire risk assessment and to provide its boarding staff with fire safety training. The risk assessment has been reviewed and significant findings have been prioritised and these have either been addressed or are in the process of being undertaken. All staff have completed fire safety training. Staff advise that they feel more confident about being able to manage a fire incident.

These responses have improved the level of fire safety for pupils and boarders and raised the staff awareness of the risk of fire.

The school has taken positive steps to re-evaluate its security measures and has revised its security risk assessment. The action taken by the school has improved the security for boarders and ensured that they are protected from having unsupervised access to unchecked adults.

The school was asked to ensure that all areas used by the boarders are free from avoidable safety hazards and that identifiable risk assessments are appropriately risk assessed. The school has engaged a health and safety consultant who has advised on the process for undertaking risk assessments. These are in place for premises grounds and activities. A number of hazards identified during the inspection have been removed. Those that remain are being included as part of the boarding house refurbishment being undertaken during the summer holiday.

The school was asked to ensure that all shower facilities are free from offensive odours. The cause of this has been identified and remedial action has been taken. Boarders now have access to facilities that are free from offensive odours.

The school has taken steps to ensure that key records which are regularly used are monitored for any trends or patterns by a senior member of staff.

A recommendation to review the arrangements for all boarders to make and receive private telephone calls has not been actioned and remains in place.

The school was asked to review the boarders' sleeping accommodation. Plans and finance have been approved for the refurbishment and reorganisation of the boarding accommodation during the summer holiday. There is ample evidence that the school is fully committed to this and the recommendation although not fully implemented has been removed.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

There is a strong emphasis within the school and the boarding provision on the encouragement and promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Good health is promoted through the school's personal, social health education programme.

The school offers weekly and some flexi-boarding and consequently the primary responsibility for the boarders' health remains with their parents. The boarders' health is promoted through the school's arrangements for first aid and health care. There are established systems and practices in place which ensure that the boarders' on-going medical and day-to-day health needs are met. Parents provide details of their children's medical history and give written permission for the school to authorise emergency medical treatment and to administer non-prescribed medicines. All of the staff have completed some level of first aid training which ensures that the boarders can have access to a suitably qualified first aider at all times.

Boarders have a good relationship with the matrons who are responsible for their day-to-day medical care. Boarders describe the matrons as being 'fantastic and caring', and being 'really helpful if you are feeling unwell'.

The new medical room provides safe storage of medication. The responsibility for the dispensing of medication is shared between the matrons and the house staff. Record keeping is not in line with good practice. Records are kept of all medicines administered by the staff. However, records are not kept on the receipt and disposal of all medication. Staff have not received training on the safe handling and administration of medication.

Boarders receive catering which is of a high standard. The catering manager and her team have a very good understanding of what makes up a balanced and healthy diet, and have an awareness of nutritional issues and put this into practice. Menus are planned in consultation with the pupils and boarders and offer a wide variety of hot and cold meals. Menu planning is adventurous and pupils routinely have the opportunity to try different cultural and international meals. Special diets are catered for. Menus are not routinely evaluated for their nutritional content. Staff monitor the amount of food that the boarders have and any concerns are followed up. Boarders have positive views about the variety, quality and presentation of the food. They have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthy food and make good use of the availability of fruit during meals and at other times during the day. Mealtimes are sociable and orderly occasions.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent practices and procedures are established in the school that safeguard the boarders, promote their welfare and ensure that they live in a safe, secure and caring environment. Boarders present as being happy and state that they feel safe in the school.

The boarders have a clear understanding of what standard of behaviour is expected from them. The boarders are encouraged to act with consideration and respect for each other. Boarders have positive and supportive relationships with each other and the boarding staff.

The boarders advise that the school promotes a zero tolerance to bullying. Boarders confirm that bullying is not an issue for them and are confident that there would be a prompt response from staff if an incident were to occur.

The management of behaviour is very good. There is an emphasis on 'rewards and praise', rather than punishment. Boarders feel that the discipline in boarding is good and that the boarding rules are fair, purposeful and consistently applied. Boarders are encouraged to reflect on behaviour that is becoming a cause for concern or unacceptable. The boarders state that the rewards they receive help them understand what behaviour is acceptable and expected from them. Parents comment on their being a 'good balance of discipline and freedom'.

The school has robust procedures in place that ensure that the boarders' welfare is promoted and they are protected from abuse. The school takes positive steps which ensure that its staff have the knowledge, awareness and skills required to respond to child protection concerns. Regular training is provided on child protection and safeguarding awareness. New staff are given a briefing on the school's procedures. The school has two designated trained child protection officers who lead and co-ordinate the response to any child protection concerns. Boarding staff are fully aware of the child protection procedures that are in place and demonstrate a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in responding to an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

The school's recruitment and vetting process is thorough. This is a contributory factor to the safeguarding of the pupils and boarders and helps to ensure that they are not cared for by staff who are actual or potential abusers. Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks are in place for all staff in the school and for other adults including peripatetic workers, coach drivers, parent volunteers and governors who may have unsupervised access to the pupils and boarders.

The school has a clearly written complaints procedure and this is made available to boarders and their parents. The school has not received any formal complaints. Boarders express their confidence in being able to take any issues and concerns directly to staff and feel comfortable talking to them. Parents also comment positively on the staff being approachable and supportive.

The boarding staff follow practices that demonstrate a high respect for the boarders' privacy. The boarders confirm that they have no issues or concerns regarding their privacy and make positive comments on the sensitive manner in which they are supervised during the boarding periods.

The school take positive steps to ensure that the boarders are protected from the risk of fire and other safety hazards. Established systems are in place for the regular checking and servicing of fire safety and detection equipment. A fire risk assessment is in place and has been reviewed and significant findings have been, or are in the process of being, addressed. Boarders regularly participate in practise fire evacuations. All staff have completed a fire safety course. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place for identifying potential hazards in the grounds, premises and activities undertaken by the boarders. The school has its own maintenance team which ensures that the grounds and buildings are maintained and are safe. Boarders are fully aware of the areas which are out of bounds.

Security is a high priority within the school. Positive steps are taken to ensure that the school's security is efficient and that this is regularly reviewed and updated if required. The boarding

provision is reserved primarily for the use of the boarders and there are suitable and adequate security measures in place to prevent unauthorised access. Visitors to the school are required to sign in and wear an identification badge. Contractors carrying out work in the school and boarding provision are supervised by member of the school's maintenance team. The security arrangements make the boarders feel safe and secure and protect them from having unsupervised contact with adults who have not been subject to the school's vetting procedures

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

The provision is good.

The arrangements for boarders' free time is an outstanding aspect of the way that the boarding is organised within the school. Boarders have access to a wide range and choice of sports and leisure activities. These are provided on and off site. The boarding staff continually add to the range of activities on offer. High risk activities are supervised by suitably qualified staff. Boarders greatly enjoy the activities and comment on the good balance between work and play. One boarder explained 'you are never bored when you board'.

Boarders receive personal support from staff. All of the boarders identify adults within the school who they feel comfortable with and who they would approach for support, advice and guidance. One boarder said that 'if you feel down there is always someone to talk to.' The school has an independent listener who boarders can contact with personal problems or concerns. The independent listener is made known to the boarders and contact details are easily available. The independent listener has completed child protection training and been subject to the school's vetting procedures.

Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination. Although the school has a strong ethos of competitive team sports, boarders also have the opportunity to participate and excel in individual sporting activities. Pupil's religious needs are respected. Relationships between the boarders is good and supportive. One boarder explained that 'everyone gets on well with each other. No one feels left out or isolated.'

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

The provision is outstanding.

The arrangements made for securing the views of the pupils and boarders are an outstanding aspect of the school. Systems for listening to and obtaining the views of boarders are fully integrated into the running of the school. There are a number of established forums, which are used to consult with the pupils and boarders. In particular, the school council is seen as a vehicle for making change. There is ample evidence that the pupils and boarders are listened to and that they are able to exert influence and bring about changes that are significant to them. The school demonstrates that it places a great value on the views and opinions of the pupils. For example, boarder's views have been sought on the planned refurbishment to the boarding provision and are actively involved in the planning of a new adventure playground.

The school is fully aware of the importance of the boarders being able to maintain contact with their families. The school offers weekly and flexi-boarding arrangements. Consequently all boarders are able to see their parents and families at weekends. During the boarding period boarders can make and receive phone calls on their own mobiles or use school phones located in the medical room and the housemaster's office. The school is in the process of providing a phone which boarders can access without first having to ask the staff for permission.



New boarders are introduced to boarding and are helped to settle in. Parents and boarders are given written information on boarding. This provides details of boarding routines, rules and what it is like to board at the school. The flexi boarding arrangement enables some prospective boarders to have a taster of the boarding experience before making a commitment. Younger boarders explain how they have been helped to settle in with support from staff and older boarders and by being encouraged to join in the boarding activity programme.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

The school does not currently provide boarders with a suitably secure, accessible space to keep personal possessions and valuables. Boarders are able to hand these into the housemaster and these are kept within his office. While some boarders feel that personal items are generally safe left in their dormitories, a few indicate that they would welcome a personal lockable space being made available to them in the boarding provision.

The boarding accommodation is located on the first and second floors in the main school building. The accommodation is generally reserved for the boarders own use. Boarders have access to a well equipped games room and a comfortable domestically furnished lounge. Boarders take an interest in their surroundings. The boarding provision is clean, tidy and in a satisfactory state of repair. There are signs of wear and tear but not of any malicious damage. Some health and safety issues identified during the last inspection and some recently reported maintenance matters are scheduled to be undertaken during the summer break.

Sleeping accommodation consists of six dormitories that provide bed spaces for between four to eight boarders. Boarders advise that they find the accommodation better in the larger dormitories now that the numbers of bunk beds have reduced. Boarders bring in their own quilts and are encouraged to personalise their bed spaces.

The school has drawn in plans and made funding available for a complete refurbishment of the dormitories. This is scheduled to take place in the summer holiday. Boarders have been consulted on the refurbishment. One dormitory is fitted out with the proposed new furniture and has been used as trial to check on its suitability. The boarders are very pleased with the new furniture and state that they find it more comfortable and enjoy the increased storage and privacy that it provides.

There are sufficient numbers of toilets, showers and washbasins to meet the current needs of the boarders and when the boarding provision is operating at full capacity. Washing and toilet facilities are distributed amongst the two floors. Two of the smaller dormitories have their own hand wash basins. Shower cubicles provide a good level of privacy for boarders while they are showering. All of toilets provide a good level of privacy. However, some locks are difficult to operate. All toilets and shower areas are clean, tidy, in a good state of repair and free from offensive odours.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The boarding provision is managed and organised in a manner that delivers and maintains a good standard of care and consistent supervision of the boarders. Boarders enjoy their residential experience and identify personal benefits from boarding.

Parents, pupils and boarders have access to range of printed and electronic information that reflects the current principles, aims, organisation and boarding practice within the school. There is evidence that those key records, that are regularly used by the school, are checked for any trends or patterns to determine whether any action needs to be taken to address them.

The boarders are supervised by groups of boarding staff who take an active interest in them. There are sufficient staff on duty during the boarding periods which ensure that the boarders are well supervised and have access to a range of activities during their free time. Boarders are aware of who is on duty at any time and know how to contact them if they need to. Parents positively comment on the good support provided by the staff and describe them as being 'very caring, friendly and always available'.

The staff undertaking boarding duties have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. All of the boarding staff have completed training in child protection, fire safety and first aid. Individual staff have undertaken specific training to deliver and supervise the higher risk activities that the boarders have access to. These arrangements ensure the boarders safety. Guidance on boarding routines and practice is provided in the boarding house handbook.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All of the boarders are valued and respected as individuals. They are all given the same opportunities regardless of age and ability. Boarders are given the opportunity to excel in a range of group and individual activities. They are encouraged to make and express their views and opinions and there is no assumption that any are incapable of doing this. The school is proactive in raising the pupils and boarders awareness of different cultures and beliefs. They celebrate and participate in different cultural festivals. The school has clearly written policies on disability and equality. Documents demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities and avoidance of inappropriate discrimination in all forms

## **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):

- provide training on the safe handling of medication to all staff involved in the administration of medication in the school (NMS.15)
- implement a system for recording the receipt and disposal of all medication (NMS.15)
- ensure that menus are evaluated for their nutritional values (NMS.24)
- review the arrangements for all boarders to make and receive private telephone calls (breach of NMS 19.3)