

St Peter's / St Olaves School

Inspection report for Boarding School

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Inspector	Lynne Busby
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	St. Peters School, Clifton, YORK, YO30 6AB
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Registered person	St Peter's/St Olave's School
Head/ Principal	Leo Winkley
Nominated person	Leo Winkley
Date of last inspection	08/09/2007

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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

St. Peter's / St. Olave's school is a co-educational boarding school. The school is situated within walking distance of the centre of the City of York and is close to local shops and amenities. Boarding pupils are accommodated in five boarding houses, one of which is reserved solely for the younger boarders from St. Olave's school.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an announced inspection assessing the school's performance in providing positive outcomes for boarders. The inspection included checking the school's progress in meeting the recommendation made at the last inspection. The inspection covered all the key national minimum standards. This inspection of the boarding provision took place at the same time as an inspection of the school which was conducted by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Both schools are well managed and have a supportive governing body. The ethos of respect in the school is reflected in the boarders' good behaviour and they represent the school well. The school is outstanding in welcoming and celebrating the diversity of boarders and pupils from overseas are integrated well into the school. Boarders gave positive comments about the school including 'the school is awesome' and 'we feel safe and well cared for'.

As a result of this inspection there was only one minor shortfall which related to ensuring a consistent record is kept of verification of references as part of the recruitment process.

Improvements since the last inspection

The head teacher was asked to make improvements to the recruitment information. This has now been addressed and it provides an accountable system which safeguards boarders.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' health is promoted through an excellent range of health policies and procedures. Boarders' health is maintained through a well organised sanatorium, which is available to offer 24-hour support. It is staffed by fully qualified nurses who

oversee all matters relating to health care and medication. There are rigorous systems in place for storage, administration and disposal of medication. There is excellent liaison between house staff and the nursing staff to ensure there is continuity of care for boarders. Boarders have access to a local doctor and they can choose to be accompanied by staff if they wish.

Each boarder's individual health needs are fully assessed when they are admitted to the school. There are consents from parents for medical treatment and the administration of non prescription medication. This enables both the teaching, boarding staff and nurses to fully meet the needs of the boarders in a sensitive manner. There is a very good programme of personal, social and health education which gives boarders a range of information on healthy lifestyles such as smoking cessation and dealing with stress.

The school has an in-house catering service. The menu provides a choice, it integrates culturally appropriate food and special diets can be catered for. Boarders can contribute their views through the food council and boarders reported some changes because of this consultation. A range of comments were received about the quality of the food some were positive such as 'a good selection to choose from' others provided constructive criticism. Such as 'breakfast and lunch are usually good quality with a wide variety of choice but tea is normally poor quality, not much variation'. The intranet site gives boarders opportunities to suggest changes they may like.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school has clear procedures for responding to child protection, which include procedures for when a child goes missing and there are procedures in relation to whistleblowing. The school's child protection coordinators have good links with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and staff are aware they need to refer any child protection concerns to them. All staff receive training in child protection and this is appropriately updated. This provides staff with the knowledge and understanding to respond appropriately to boarders' concerns. Boarders are empowered by staff to keep themselves safe and they say that they all feel protected and safe within the school.

There is a comprehensive policy on bullying which is available to parents, pupils and staff and this is followed in practice. Boarders confirm that there is a low incidence of bullying within the school and that staff act immediately and effectively to any information that bullying might be taking place. Pupils say 'there never seems to be any bullying in this school'.

All boarders say there is someone they can talk to if they have any concerns. There is a complaints procedure and records of complaints are clear and demonstrate how they are responded to promptly.

The school has a robust recruitment and selection process for all staff including, ancillary staff and gap students. Criminal Records Bureau disclosures at an enhanced level are undertaken prior to staff working at the school. The school maintains records of the recruitment process and references are verified. However, there is minor shortfall in that this is not consistently recorded on staff files.

The school have well-developed policies and practice on behaviour and discipline. Boarders say that sanctions are fair and proportionate. The use of sanctions is minimal and a clear record is kept of those administered and the reasons for them. The staff promote respect for others and this was seen throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour was good and they were a credit to the school in how they conducted themselves.

The school has thorough risk assessments for all aspects of safety including fire. Boarders are protected from health and safety risks by the excellent response to such matters. Boarders are proficient in the fire evacuation procedures and regular fire drills are undertaken. Boarders are safe from public intrusion because buildings and access to the school are secure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The staff show an excellent commitment to supporting and encouraging boarders to enjoy and achieve. They are sensitive to each boarder's individual needs. Boarders all say there is someone they can talk to if they have a problem, there is also an independent listener and a school counsellor available to them. There is a personal tutor system and the boarders can discuss academic and personal matters with their tutors.

The school has an integrated international community. Staff demonstrated a very good understanding of the needs of children of different ages, gender and cultural backgrounds. There are good policies that reflect equality and diversity and the school has a commitment to equal opportunities and the avoidance of inappropriate discrimination. Pupils for whom English is not their preferred language say 'people are all very kind and help'.

Boarders have access to a wide range of activities, sports and pursuits during the evenings and weekends. They have access to a fully equipped gymnasium, tennis courts and there is currently a new swimming pool being built. Boarders feel there is enough free time to relax. The boarders have access to computers and these have suitable safeguards to protect them from harm.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute their views about the operation of the boarding provision. For example, during in-house meetings and through the school and the food councils. The boarders feel listened to about most issues which are raised.

The school ensures that the induction of new boarders is carried out in a way that is sensitive to their needs. Boarders said they were welcomed into the school and had opportunities to visit the school and stay over before they started. A mentoring system is in place for the first week matching new boarders to senior pupils to ensure they settle into the school routines.

There are good relationships between staff and boarders. Boarders say that 'the boarding house staff are very caring and kind' and 'they are always there to help'. The boarding house staff have daily meetings with the boarders to discuss any problems which may occur. Therefore, any issues can be quickly resolved.

Boarders benefit from excellent facilities to keep in touch with their families. These include email, telephones and the younger pupils send a letter home each week. Staff also keep in touch with parents if they need to discuss welfare issues but also to give positive feedback on achievements. Phones are available in boarding houses in areas that afford boarders privacy. The majority of boarders also have mobile phones. Contact numbers for help lines are visible near phones and are on the schools intranet for boarders who are in distress or who may have problems.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarders' money and valuables are kept safe. They have lockable storage to keep their possessions safe and they can leave valuables with the house staff who ensure they are stored securely. Boarders' personal privacy is respected. Staff demonstrated an excellent understanding about ensuring pupils are safe without intruding on their privacy at sensitive times, such as when they are dressing or showering.

The boarding houses are well maintained and appropriately lit, heated and ventilated. All houses are comfortably furnished and efforts have been made to make them feel homely. The sleeping accommodation is sufficient in size and boarders can personalise their space. There is adequate storage for clothing and property. Within the houses there are suitable facilities for both organised prep and private study.

Overall boarders have good bathing and toilet facilities which offer privacy. Provision for younger male boarders is generally satisfactory but currently they have to walk downstairs to access bathing facilities which compromises their privacy.

Boarding pupils were positive about the boarding houses. They demonstrated a pride in the school and have a strong sense of identity with the house they board in.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

There is suitable statement of the school's boarding practices and principles which is available with a range of information for parents, boarders and staff. All relevant policies are available both in hard copy and on the school's website.

Boarders benefit from experienced and knowledgeable boarding staff and new staff have been warmly received by the pupils. Boarders say 'the house parents are caring and want what is best for us. They try to make our lives here easy and fun'. There is a clear rota in the houses indicating which staff are on duty and boarders are clear about who has responsibility for them and say that they can contact a staff member at any time. Boarders are adequately supervised at night. There is a signing in and out system and staff are clear about who is sleeping in the house each night. There is excellent communication between the boarding and teaching staff which contributes to the welfare of boarders.

Staff who are involved in boarding have a job description reflecting their duties. Staff receive an induction into boarding when they are newly appointed and there are opportunities for staff to access continued training.

The school is well managed and the headteachers and senior staff monitor records and identify any trends to ensure boarders are cared for and safe.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Pupils are treated fairly by staff and their identity is recognised and respected. There is guidance for staff, in the staff handbook, on issues related to overseas pupils. The school promotes inclusion in the wider community by an excellent activity programme whereby pupils are involved in organising community projects. The school has clear written policies on disability, religious, dietary and cultural needs which provides guidance for staff.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure that there is evidence that references have been verified (NMS 38.2)