

Kingsley School

Inspection report for Boarding School

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Inspector	Michelle Oxley / Kenneth Smith
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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

The school is an independent co-educational day and boarding school with a Methodist Church foundation. It has a kindergarten, junior and senior school. The school is emerging from a recent process of amalgamation with another independent co-educational day and boarding school. In July 2009 the headteacher of this school and its boarding staff took over full responsibility for the operation of both school and boarding. Its identity as a new independent school is beginning to establish well.

The school occupies a 50 acre site and facilities include a sports hall, theatre and field studies centre. Three houses are currently being used for boarding provision, two for boys (one of which uses the sixth form centre as an annex) and one for girls.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The purpose of this inspection is to assess the provision of boarding at the school against key National Minimum Standards, under each of the Every Child Matters outcome areas.

The provision of boarding is good. The school is emerging from a period of significant change, this has been well managed and the impact on boarders minimised. The operation of boarding is well organised by the Head of boarding and carried out effectively by a team of experienced and efficient staff. The provision of boarding is supported and given a high priority by the headteacher.

Boarders benefit from a caring and structured environment, provided by house-parents and boarding staff who are liked and respected.

Following this inspection there are six recommendations made.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection there were three recommendations made. These have been addressed as follows:

It was recommended that consideration be given to replacing bedroom furniture in boarding houses. This has now occurred and the provision of furnishings is satisfactory.

A recommendation was made regarding the upgrading of the shower areas in terms of privacy and décor. Some redecoration has taken place providing an appropriate

standard in this respect. However an associated recommendation is made regarding privacy in this area.

The wording used for permissible sanctions in documentation has been revised as recommended.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Boarders receive personal social and health education lessons that prepare them for adult life. The key messages from this are known to house-parents and opportunities to reinforce or further explore messages are welcomed. There are policies on alcohol, smoking and the use of illegal drugs which are made clear to boarders. Staff respond robustly, with real consideration of the most effective and proportionate intervention given the circumstances of any boarder or event which challenges this policy.

Records within boarding houses and within the medical centre support effective intervention for any boarder with ongoing health care needs. Parental consents are in place for all boarders regarding first aid and other medical treatment that may be anticipated. The information sharing between senior managers, school nurse and other staff on a need to know basis is excellent. The frequency of contact and the level of concern and interest of all key staff ensure boarders needs are met discreetly and consistently.

There are a high proportion of first aid trained staff, including all house-parents and all sports teachers. This ensures that boarders are attended to very promptly and professionally when accidents occur. The school nurse oversees the provision of health care, linking closely with two General Practitioners (one male, one female). There are twice weekly visits by the General Practitioners to the school, and boarders are always seen in a timely way. Dentists and opticians are usually accessed from boarders home services, but local arrangements will be made if needed for follow up or urgent intervention.

Prescribed medications are relatively infrequent, but always given diligently and the nurse and house-parents maintain records of this. Boarders aged 16 and over may self-administer medication if they and the house-parent are satisfied that this is safe. Similarly boarders with asthma usually manage their own inhalers with discreet oversight by house-parents. The management of non-prescribed medication is good and both the school nurse and the house-parents are always aware of any that has been administered.

Individual welfare needs of children are responded to well and with determination to help and resolve problems. It was noted that some young people with complex personal needs do not have specific welfare plans written. Staff communication is good and all staff are aware of issues on a need to know basis.

Meals are well organised through the central kitchen and provide young people with

choice and good quantities of food throughout boarding. The feedback from young people and staff was mixed, and this area will benefit from review. The provision of food and snacks in boarding houses is quite limited (plain cereals and toast and jam), and many boarders buy additional food from local shops.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The welfare of boarders is promoted and protected by the schools approach to safeguarding young people. The appointed designated person has established links with the relevant safeguarding agencies and has good up-to-date knowledge of how to deal with welfare concerns. All staff across school and boarding receive training in safeguarding children and young people. Boarding staff work closely in conjunction with school staff to identify and discretely manage any potential welfare concerns. Boarders are provided with good information about how to keep safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about welfare. The established procedures are well organised and easily accessed by both staff and boarders.

Staff communication networks and vigilant practice serves to protect boarders welfare by preventing bullying. Boarders do not identify bullying as a problem. They say that when incidents occur staff respond promptly and at an early stage. Staff have a good awareness of the potential harm derived from the use of the internet, mobile phones and other electronic devices. Good conduct is promoted through an approach which focuses on educating young people as a means of protecting them. In addition, the use of bullying surveys serves as a preventive tool.

Disciplinary measures used in boarding are clearly set out and well known to staff and boarders. There is no excessive use of disciplinary measures and boarders say that they are treated fairly. The prefect system serves to protect and support boarder's welfare. Student heads of house are well informed about the expected code of conduct and practice. Behaviour across boarding is observed as being good, relations between boarders and boarding house staff are positive and respectful. Policy documents relating to discipline are accessible to boarders and staff, but these have not been updated to comprehensively reflect current practice.

Complaints are appropriately addressed. The complaints system is accessible and well known to boarders. The headteacher holds a record of complaints made, the outcome and investigation is recorded.

There are good systems in place regarding fire safety. Staff and boarders are knowledgeable about fire safety and the emergency evacuation procedure is well known. Fire safety equipment checks are carried out at the required intervals. Fire drills are also carried out frequently. A fire safety risk assessment is in place.

There is a system in place to deal with the vetting of staff. A single central record has been compiled. Some files contain all the required information as set out in safer

recruitment guidance and the national minimum standards. However this is not consistently the case as some of the information is omitted on some staff personnel records.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is a very good range of activities available to boarders. Boarders and day pupils have the opportunity to sign up for activities of their choice. These take place at lunch time and between 4.00 and 5.00 p.m. each week day. There is an extensive choice ranging from sports, art and crafts and science projects. Prep takes place in the library after activities and then after tea in the boarding houses. Later in the evening boarders have sufficient time to relax in the boarding house or they can choose to get involved in leisure opportunities.

Good facilities are provided on site, these include a sports hall, tennis and netball courts, games pitches, a theatre, computer suite and library. The houses are well stocked with arts and craft materials, books, games, television and game stations. At weekends there is a trip to the local supermarket and transport is provided to a nearby town. The school makes good use of facilities in the local area by linking with community and national projects; visits to local beaches and attractions also take place.

Policy guidance regarding the personal concerns of boarders is available and is implemented in practice. Boarders receive good personal support from school staff, including house-parents, tutors and boarding house staff. Boarders who were spoken with were, without exception, able to identify a member of staff who they felt they could talk to about personal problems or concerns.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are good opportunities for boarders to contribute their views to the operation of the boarding houses. Formal systems are in place to ascertain their views, including a boarder's council and a food council. A survey of boarder's views is also carried out. Boarders feel that their views are listened to and taken seriously, they say that changes are made in response to their comments and gave examples of these. On a less formal basis boarders say that staff listen to their views on a day-to-day basis.

Boarders are able to keep in touch with families and significant others. A telephone is available in the boarding houses where parents often phone in. Boarders also use their mobile phones or laptop computers to keep in touch. The internet systems are satisfactory, although some difficulties with local connections can cause the system to overload and crash at times of peak demand. Boarding house staff are adept at rebooting the system when required.

Relations between boarders and boarding house staff are excellent. Relations are caring and supportive within the context of a structured and well-organised environment. Boarders say that they get along with their staff and that they feel they are well supported.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Boarders possessions are safe within their accommodation. They have lockable cupboards, and there is a strong culture of trust which staff endeavour to foster. Boarders pocket money is held safely on their behalf and given to them on a regular and agreed basis.

The accommodation for boarders is of a satisfactory standard and provides individual beds, desks and clothing storage for each child. No bunk beds are used in any of the houses. The communal areas of boarding houses provide adequate seating, tables and recreational equipment to enjoy domestic free time. The main communal space in Carisbrooke is particularly attractive. In Longfield young people have been involved in plans to alter the facilities in the two lounges. Young people in Mary Shaw enjoy a wide range of facilities, which comprise the sixth form centre outside of boarding times. This is an unusual, but satisfactory arrangement and boarders personal rooms cannot be accessed through the day by users of the centre. Showering arrangements are adequate. However, there are showers in Belvoir which do not have privacy locks. In Longfield most showers have locks but there are four within larger bathrooms which do not offer that level of privacy. In Carisbrooke there are three showers, and boarders report some queuing occurs on weekday mornings. Toilets are all lockable throughout boarding houses. All have wash-hand basins close at hand, although not always in the same cubicle.

Boarders may obtain basic toiletries in-house, but many enjoy going into the local town to access the wider range available there.

Boarding houses are decorated to a satisfactory standard, there are many homely touches in lounges, photographs or art work displayed and a child friendly environment maintained. Corridors are quite bare, however the school has an allocated budget to decorate communal areas, which is due to be spent later this term. Repairs are undertaken in a timely way; some young people highlighted this as an improvement they have seen in their time living here.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of boarding is very good. The head of boarding is a strong and effective leader who seeks to continually improve and develop the service. The provision of boarding is given a high priority and is supported by the

headteacher. Good systems have been established to ensure that boarder's welfare is protected through effective communication strategies, good risk management strategies, well organised record keeping and efficient monitoring systems.

Boarding house staff provide effective support to boarders. House-parents are provided with good training opportunities, they are experienced and carry out their role efficiently and with confidence. They offer a well organised and supportive environment. Staff supervision of boarders is sufficient in numbers. The duty rota effectively supports house-parents by enabling them to take valuable time off. The rota benefits boarders as the arrangements ensure that activities are available for those who choose them and ensures that support is available when required. A crisis management plan is in place and there are arrangements to cover staff who may need to take time off.

The boarding house handbook provides a good range of clearly written reference guides for boarding house staff. This includes a statement of principles and practice. However the handbook omits a recently introduced practice associated with supporting behaviour.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Boarders from across the world are made welcome at the school and within boarding. They receive the same support regardless of their race, culture or background. In general real integration of children from different nationalities is gently encouraged.

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...

- use written welfare plans to guide all staff supporting children with complex health or personal needs (NMS 17.2).
- consider increasing the variety of food available in boarding houses (NMS 25.1)
- remove reference to previous practice from the discipline policy (NMS 4.2)
- ensure that staff files consistently contain evidence of vetting procedures inline with National minimum Standards and Safer Recruitment Guidance (NMS 38.2)
- consider provision of additional showers in Carisbrooke to prevent queues at peak times, and increase privacy for boarders through provision of locks on all showers, wherever practical (NMS 44)
- create a policy document within the boarding handbook outlining the newly introduced behaviour support system. (NMS 35)