

# King's School Canterbury

Inspection report for Boarding School

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<b>Inspector</b>	Lucy Martin
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	20/11/2006

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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 King's School, Canterbury, can trace its origins as far back as 597, when Augustine founded his monastery. Education has taken place on the site continuously from that time. Since 1541, when Henry VIII established the school for boys as part of his Cathedral Foundation, several charters have been granted which result in the present-day co-educational school for pupils aged from thirteen to eighteen.

The school is located in the centre of Canterbury next to the cathedral. There are two principal sites within a few minutes walk from each other; the Precincts and St Augustine's. The school has 15 houses, 12 of which are for boarders. At the time of this inspection there were approximately 790 pupils in the school, of whom about 616 were full boarders. The school has termly boarding only and does not operate weekly or flexi boarding.

## **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The school was given short notice of this inspection which was carried out at the same time as the education inspection undertaken by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. All the key standards identified by Ofsted were inspected. The judgements made at this inspection cannot be compared with those made at the last inspection which was undertaken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

All the areas inspected were found to be good or outstanding. Leadership of pastoral care and the boarding houses is strong. Boarders enjoy boarding and there are excellent relationships between boarders and school staff. The welfare of pupils is at the heart of the school and boarders feel well supported by a variety of staff. The school is committed to making sure that boarders are kept safe. There are effective safeguarding procedures in place and any incidents regarding bullying are effectively dealt with. Boarders feel safe and well cared for and they can take issues to any number of people, confident that they will be taken seriously and addressed.

There is much good practice within the boarding houses. However, more robust systems of monitoring by management would ensure greater consistency between the houses. Health care is good, although there are some inconsistencies of practice regarding the administration of prescribed medication.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The previous inspection of the boarding provision was undertaken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in 2006. Three recommendations were made and all have been met. Two concerned security and maintenance issues which have been addressed. The third recommendation was to review the way the outcomes of consultations are conveyed to pupils. Pupils during this inspection confirmed that they feel the school consults with them well, they feel involved in the process and are made aware of the outcomes.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Boarders' health is promoted well. The school places appropriate importance on encouraging good health through the access to medical care and education. The varied balanced diet and emphasis on outside activities means that boarders are well prepared for leading a healthy life style. The personal, social and health education programme combined with the good quality pastoral care support provided helps to raise boarders' awareness of important issues relating to their general well-being.

Boarders have access to a well-equipped medical centre which is staffed 24 hours a day. The medical centre is staffed by one senior nurse, four nurses and two part-time housekeepers. Qualified nurses and routine first aid training for matrons helps to ensure boarders receive appropriate first aid and minor illness treatment. Records are kept across the boarding houses of illnesses, accidents and medication administered to boarders. There is however, no system of ongoing monitoring of the records kept. This means that there is no overview as to whether the practice matches the expectations in terms of record keeping and results in some inconsistencies in the clarity and detail of recording across houses. Relevant information on the health care needs of each boarder plays an important part in the admission process. Consent for medical treatment including the administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication is obtained. While there is guidance in place on the administration of medication there are inconsistencies between houses. The practice of secondary dispensing which takes place on occasions when a matron covers another house, has the potential to lead to accidental mix-ups and errors.

Boarders comment positively about the good level of support given to them to promote their general health and well-being. They indicate that they are well looked after when unwell and that matrons provide excellent pastoral care. This is complemented by the support given by the school nurses, the counsellor and other staff with pastoral care responsibilities.

The quality of the catering is excellent. The school has three dining rooms and all offer a wide choice of high quality foods at each meal time. There is always a choice of hot food, including a vegetarian choice and a well-stocked salad bar. All dietary needs are accommodated. Pupils with food allergies are known to catering staff and food is clearly labelled when served. The supplies sent to the boarding houses are

generous and include fresh fruit. The pupils' views are canvassed through a committee and changes to the menus reflect their requests wherever possible.

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

The provision is good.

The school has good procedures in place to ensure that boarders are kept safe from harm. The anti-bullying policy and the pupil guidelines printed in the school calendar make it clear that bullying is considered to be an extremely serious matter. Boarders report that they do not feel bullying is an issue at the school. On occasions where there have been incidents, boarders say that bullying is effectively dealt with by staff. A policy on e-safety highlights the dangers of inappropriate use of electronic and digital communications. Staff were made more aware of this area through recent training.

Boarders' behaviour is generally very good. They know what is expected of them and the likely consequences for breaking the rules. Records of major punishments are maintained and this data is regularly reviewed to monitor trends and patterns. Boarders feel that if they break the rules they are dealt with fairly and few sanctions are imposed within the boarding houses. However, there are some variations in practice regarding the recording of minor punishments. For example, some houses maintain such records and others do not.

The procedures for responding to complaints are printed in the school calendar, the staff handbook and on the school's website. Whilst the procedures are detailed, this information does not inform boarders and their parents of how they can contact Ofsted and the Local Authority Designated Officer regarding any complaint concerning their welfare.

The school has robust procedures and practices in place regarding safeguarding. The designated person at the school for child protection has attended the appropriate level of training for this role and all staff, including support staff, receive regular training in safeguarding. Staff are aware of the procedures and the action to take if they have concerns. Clear records are maintained including contact with the local authority.

The school has recently strengthened its procedures regarding staff recruitment. This has resulted in more robust procedures and there is good recording of the checks undertaken before employment. The school ensures that taxi drivers and the driving instructors used at the school have Criminal Record Bureau Checks undertaken.

There are sound health and safety procedures in place including the risk of fire. The school completes fire risk assessments for all the boarding houses, which are updated when significant changes to the fabric/layout of houses take place. There are maintenance contracts and the school completes weekly/monthly checks of alarms and lighting. Fire drills take place in boarding time and there is a good level of awareness amongst the staff regarding the risks posed by fire. Recent staff training

has taken place on fire safety and evacuation procedures.

There is good site security despite the fact that the school is spread out over two areas and the proximity to the cathedral. Due to the sensitive use of CCTV and the level of staffing, both from the school and the cathedral, the pupils feel safe and public intrusion is very well managed. Boarders are well protected from safety hazards in the houses.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school provides an excellent range of activities for boarders, which include many opportunities for games and sport. The school's recreation centre is a popular asset; following a thorough and structured assessment, pupils can access facilities which include a gym, dance studio, tennis, swimming, table tennis and fencing. In addition, clubs and societies are arranged, aimed at being inclusive by providing a broad spectrum of topics. Equally boarders confirm they have sufficient time for rest and relaxation. Some boarders would like a few more structured activities during weekends and this is being acted upon by the school. The use of laptops is well monitored by house staff and boarders know the consequences of inappropriate use. In addition, effective safeguarding systems exist to minimise the risk of access to inappropriate material on the internet.

Very positive feedback from boarders confirms they believe they have excellent personal support; they can clearly identify different people to share concerns with. Each has a personal tutor they can turn to for guidance or support and the school's ethos is to enable them to speak with whoever they feel most comfortable with. A school counsellor is available most days and details of how pupils can contact him directly are well publicised and well known. In addition they can share any personal concerns with the school's chaplain or contact the independent visitor. Boarders also report excellent relationships with the house staff including the domestics, matrons, housemaster/mistresses and deputies.

Difference is valued at the school. Although there is a clear Christian ethos, the school embraces those from differing cultures and religious faiths. There are facilities to enable access for young people with disabilities and those young people who require special diets, for cultural or religious reasons are well catered for within the excellent catering provision. The staff are very alert to those boarders who struggle to integrate; they work hard to provide the additional support they need to prevent them being isolated. Some boarders acknowledge they take time to settle but do not report being discriminated against or bullied for being different. Policies refer to equality of opportunity and how the school will manage any incident of discrimination.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each teacher is a personal tutor to a group of boarders; their weekly shift in a house enables them to hear boarders views, whereby boarding is an integral part of the school. Pupils are very positive about boarding and believe that the school considers their views are important. Formal forums enable them to be listened to at a senior level within the school; equally there are many informal avenues they can choose. Boarders believe they are well represented on school committees and can give examples of changes that have been made as a result of suggestions they have raised.

Boarders confirm that they can keep in private contact with their parents and families. They value the chance to have 'leave' at weekends as well as exeats several times each term; these are flexible around each boarder's school commitments. Mobile telephones are allowed, with few restrictions; pay telephones and e-mail contact is also readily available and many boarders have access to internet communication systems. Similarly, the school communicates promptly with parents and guardians by telephone or through e-mail, about welfare concerns relating to their child. Help lines and outside contact numbers that the boarders may call if they are distressed, are well publicised.

New pupils are welcomed into the school and those who board confirm they feel looked after. Written information is provided to guide them in the boarding routines in their house, as well as the rules of the school. Experienced boarders support the new boarders to help them feel less isolated. There is good communication amongst the staff which ensures that any boarder initially anxious about being away from home is well supported.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Overall, the quality of the boarding accommodation is good. There are 15 houses, 12 of which have boarders. There are six boarding houses for girls and six boarding houses for boys. All the boarding houses are situated within close proximity to the school. This helps to enhance the sense of community which is evident in the school.

The level of cleanliness throughout the boarding accommodation is of a high standard. While there is a variation in the layout and style of the boarding houses, all are pleasantly furnished and decorated to a good standard. This provides a satisfying environment which in turn promotes a sense of pride and respect amongst boarders of their surroundings. All houses have well-serviced communal areas and kitchen facilities where boarders are able to prepare snacks and drinks. Boarders personalise those areas which they regard as their own and there is good provision to store personal possessions. Boarders rooms and facilities provided afford appropriate levels of privacy.



An effective system exists to attend to minor maintenance issues across the boarding houses. Health and safety checks take place across all houses and risk assessments are carried out by the matrons. They are completed at different times and there is some uncertainty by matrons as to the purpose and monitoring of these assessments.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The school has a suitable statement of boarding principles and practice. It has recently been reviewed and reflects current boarding practice at the school. There is a staff handbook and the school's website is informative and includes key policies and procedures. Each house has its own handbook which vary in quality and content.

Boarding staff are positive about the leadership of boarding and the houses are well led by the individual housemasters and housemistresses. The houses are well organised and daily routines run smoothly. There are weekly meetings of all housemasters/mistresses which are well attended and minuted. All the boarding houses operate slightly differently and it is not evident that there are clear management systems in place to monitor and evaluate practice within the houses. Members of the senior management team visit the houses but do not formally monitor records. This would ensure greater consistency of effective practice.

There are adequate levels of staff supervision in the boarding houses. In addition to the housemasters/mistresses, house matrons generally cover the houses during the day and there has been the appointment of twilight and night matrons to ensure better matron cover. In the evening, there is a house tutor on duty in each house. Since the last inspection, there are now deputy housemasters/mistresses in all houses.

All boarding staff are trained for their roles. Boarding staff are encouraged to pursue training in welfare issues and a number have attended the Boarding Schools' Association courses for example, in areas including counselling and mental health.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The pastoral care ensures that support systems are equally available to boarders regardless of age, gender or nationality. The school fosters a big commitment to community service, this extends beyond the school into local communities and support for projects and charities at a local, national and international level.

## **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...

- review the procedures regarding the administration of prescribed medication (NMS 15.12)
- ensure that the non NHS health and medication records maintained in the boarding houses are regularly monitored by an appropriate designated member of staff (NMS 5.15)
- ensure that boarders and their parents are informed by the school of how they can contact Ofsted and the Local Authority Designated Officer regarding any complaints concerning their welfare (NMS 5.4)
- ensure that there are management systems in place to monitor practice, records, including health and safety records in the boarding houses. (NMS 8.2)