

# The Swedish School Society

Inspection report for Boarding School

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<b>Inspector</b>	Jackie Graves
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<b>Nominated person</b>	Jan Dackenberg
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	12/12/2006

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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 school provides education for Swedish children across two sites in Southwest London. Younger pupils attend the school in Barnes. The senior student site is accommodated within the American International University, Richmond Hill. The host family scheme is administered from the Richmond site.

The school does not provide boarding accommodation but recruits families in the local area to host students during their stay in England. A Host Family Coordinator is employed to recruit host families, administer the scheme and to liaise with students and families when necessary.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This announced full inspection looked at the relevant key National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges, as these, rather than boarding school standards, are relevant to this setting. The quality of hosting arrangements at The Swedish School Society Ltd is good.

Host families give good support to help students adapt to a new culture and country. Some positive relationships are established which endure beyond the students' stay in England. In surveys, some students gave their views of host arrangements: 'I speak a lot of English every day and love living in my host family;' and 'It is extremely nice to live in another family, you get to deal with a new culture which is exciting' and 'Very nice and caring host family. They make you feel like part of the family.'

The management of hosting arrangements is effective, making sure students from Sweden are fully supported to integrate into the school community and their host families. Effective support is provided for any student who has personal worries.

Clear information is provided to both students and families taking part in the host scheme. There is effective communication between the Host Family Coordinator, the students and their host families.

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

At the last inspection the school was asked to ensure that checks with the Criminal Records Bureau are carried out specifically for adults over the age of eighteen in

their role as hosts. This has now been achieved and improves safety in the recruitment process.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

There are effective procedures in place to ensure that the good health and emotional well-being of students is promoted. Host families liaise with medical professionals to make sure that students receive the general health information and treatment they need. Details of more specialist medical services are supplied to students. They may approach such services directly to ensure privacy.

Students are well cared for when they are poorly. Host families are required to inform the school when students are unwell and records are kept of any illness or accident.

There is appropriate support for any student undergoing periods of personal stress, for example, because of problems at home or educational pressures. Students have a range of contacts who they may approach for personal support, including the host coordinator, school manager and the school counsellor. They are encouraged to talk to their host families and are also supplied with contact details for support agencies external to the school, such as ChildLine.

Students are content with the food supplied at their placements, with most joining their hosts for family type meals. One student commented: 'I have a really good host family! The food is great!' Host families are required to provide a nutritious, varied diet. Their contracts specify the meals which should be provided to students. The Host Coordinator makes sure families are aware of any special dietary needs students may have to ensure these can be met.

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

The provision is good.

Students feel they are kept safe in their host families. They feel nurtured and protected and secure with the agreed rules, for example, about overnight stays and times to be in by in the evenings.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection with a clear policy to refer to. The school follows a robust system of checking adults in households when assessing their suitability to host students. Host families make sure students are supervised when there are adult visitors in their homes who have not been checked.

There is a complaints procedure which encourages students to raise any concerns. Some students are more confident about approaching the Host Coordinator to deal with any concerns or complaints about their arrangements rather than the host family directly.

It is made clear that disciplinary matters are not to be addressed by host families. Standards of behaviour are reported to be high. The school's expectations in terms of student behaviour are made clear in documentation to hosts: 'We do not permit unruly, rude or unseemly behaviour.' Any behavioural issues are dealt with by the school in conjunction with parents and in severe cases, students would be sent home.

It is reported that bullying not a problem at the school. Staff take the prevention of bullying seriously through the bullying plan. They make sure students have sources of help should they experience bullying.

Students say they have sufficient levels of privacy in their lodgings. Families are expected to treat the student as 'one of the family' and make them feel included. However, they balance this with respect for students' preference to spend time alone or with friends.

Health and safety in lodgings is promoted through checks, which are carried out at initial assessments then subsequently every year. These checks identify any obvious health and safety hazards.

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

The provision is good.

Students receive good support and advice from the Host Family Coordinator and host families. A student commented: 'The family members are eager to help me with any problems I have. I really feel like one in the family.'

Students are appointed personal tutors who monitor their education and general welfare. Students benefit from having access to a counsellor who they may approach to discuss any personal or welfare matters. Arrangements for seeing the counsellor are well managed, so this occurs outside of lesson time, and in a discreet location, to respect student confidentiality.

There are no reports of discrimination or lack of respect. Students feel they are well prepared for the cultural differences they find on their move to England and are helped to integrate and enjoy the experience. The school is considering a student suggestion that some host families may benefit from an introduction to Swedish culture to assist their hosting arrangements.

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

The provision is good.

Families are carefully assessed to make sure students are appropriately matched to their hosts. Families make useful links with students before they arrive in the country, to help them feel welcome.

A full induction to the host family scheme, and life in London, helps students settle when they first arrive in the country. Host families are expected to take students to school on their first day to help them learn the route and become familiar with local transport. Arrangements for social activities, involving students and host families, encourages students to integrate and feel settled.

Students are enabled to maintain contact with family and friends. Arrangements for telephone use is written into contracts for host families and they are encouraged to supply internet access.

Students are able to contribute their views on hosting arrangements throughout their stay. Additionally, they complete evaluations before returning to Sweden. Their views about the host scheme may then be considered and incorporated into the development of the service.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Accommodation is checked, to ensure that it is suitable, before host families are accepted to provide lodgings for students. The Host Coordinator makes sure that there are appropriate standards of furnishings, accommodation, health, safety and hygiene to meet students' needs. However, observations of health and safety are not evidenced in records. Arrangements for access to the building, meals, laundry and telephone access are also assessed and agreed with hosts in clear written contracts.

Families are carefully assessed to make sure that students are appropriately matched to their hosts. A full assessment of the host family includes looking at their interests, lifestyle and pets. Checks, on all adults living in the home, with the Criminal Records Bureau are made before students are placed in homes. The coordinator visits all host families once a year and is available to them for any problems which may arise. If students are not happy with their host arrangements, they can and do request a move. The staff are clear that students must be happy with their host arrangements in order to have a successful time in the school.

The host coordinator meets students once during the year to discuss their lodging arrangements and take action on any concerns or complaints. The number of students in host arrangements has increased considerably. Although it is made clear that staff support is always available and that students may request further meetings with the Host Family Coordinator to discuss their lodgings, meetings are not taking place at least once per term as recommended.

Staff confirmed that no off-site short-term accommodation is arranged by the school. Trips abroad are arranged using only hotels and the whole trip is risk assessed.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

Students, host families and parents are provided with clear information about the scheme so they know what to expect. Staff are supported by training and clear policies, for example in child protection, to ensure they can keep students safe.

Senior management monitor essential records, for example risk assessments and complaints, to identify any issues requiring action.

## 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 the school has documentary evidence that at least once per school term a member of staff discusses their lodgings separately with each student accommodated in host families, recording the student's assessment in writing and taking action on any concerns and complaints (NMS 46.8)
- record that lodgings are free of obvious significant health and safety hazards (e.g. dangerous electrical fittings or equipment, fire risks). (NMS 46.3)