



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

BOARDING SCHOOL

Ellesmere College

**Ellesmere
Shropshire
SY12 9AB**

Lead Inspector
Jackie Callaghan

Key Announced Inspection
15th January 2007 09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Boarding Schools*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of school	Ellesmere College
Address	Ellesmere Shropshire SY12 9AB
Telephone number	01691 622321
Fax number	01691 623286
Email address	hmsecretary@ellesmere.com
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Woodard Schools (Midlands Division)
Name of Head	Mr B J Wignall
Name of Head of Care	
Age range of boarding pupils	
Date of last welfare inspection	

Brief Description of the School:

Ellesmere College is an Independent Co-educational school for pupils aged 8-18 years. Boarding is available for pupils aged 10 and above. Founded in 1879, it is part of the Woodard Corporation, a group of Church of England Schools. Pupils from all faiths attend and are welcomed at the school.

At the time of the inspection, 193 pupils were boarding at the school on a full-time or weekly basis. Some pupils are dyslexic and the school also provides for a number of pupils who have other special needs.

The school is set in grounds extending to some 70 acres, on the fringe of the market town of Ellesmere, in North Shropshire.

Boarding accommodation is mainly provided in the five separate areas of the school building, which is purpose-built in the traditional 'H' shape design adopted by the Woodard Corporation. Further accommodation, for older girls, is provided in a separate house outside the main school building. For a few older boys, boarding accommodation is provided in individual boarding rooms in 'Nanki' block, which is within the main school courtyard area.

Pastoral care and support are provided to boarders by house staff, by staff with teaching duties who also have boarding responsibilities, and by nursing staff. Other staff, who do not have direct pastoral care responsibilities, contribute to the welfare provision for boarders. There is a Head of Boarding at the school who is directly responsible to the Head Master.

Boarders are provided with 'out of school' activities and there are systems in place to monitor the safety of these activities.

Students have to pay for external weekend activities or they can choose to undertake non-paid activities on site.

CSCI would like to thank Mr Sampson for his time and patience.

SUMMARY

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

Three inspectors went to the School on Monday 6th November the School knew that they were going to visit. The inspectors stayed at the School for three days and were able to spend time talking to the young people that board at Ellesmere College.

The inspectors also:

- Spoke to the Headmaster, Deputy Head Pastoral, Housemasters and some staff
- Looked at some files
- Watched how the young people and staff got along together

To help the inspector to write the report the Headmaster, Mr Wignall sent the inspector information about the School. The inspector also used other information, which she already knew about the School.

What the school does well:

These are some of the good things that the inspectors saw and the student' and staff told them about.

- "Bullying between friends is not regarded as bullying more friendly banter".
- "You couldn't get away with bullying here the school is too small and someone would know".
- "The staff are good at recognising when you are unhappy"
- "I like to think that we are good at making sure the students are supported and happy, but we have to be mindful and on our guard that bullying can happen and does from time to time"
- "Staff respect us and treat us as individuals".
- **These comments told the inspector that there is a good atmosphere at Ellesmere College where students are supported to look after each other.**
- "Having allocated prep time, having structure but some independent time offers a good balance. Helps you learn to live away from home".

- "Learning to live with people, especially learning about differences and different backgrounds, cultures and ways of life".
- "We have a kitchen, oven, cooker good facilities for socialising which is important. A good mix of single and double rooms".
- "The housemothers are well chosen for their jobs they are so lovely and supportive".
- **These comments showed that staff were supportive treating children equally but supporting them to be individuals".**

- **What the inspectors saw**

- Young people were relaxing in their bedrooms on an evening when the inspectors visited their houses.
- The bedroom walls were full of posters or interesting articles.
- Students were freely talking to staff and those that needed help were openly asking for staff to assist them.
- Students are well looked after and they also learn about looking after themselves, which helps them to prepare for becoming an adult.

What has improved since the last inspection?

- The staff are receiving more varied training which has included bullying. The pastoral system encourages the reporting of bullying and a co-ordinated response to dealing with it.
- All staff receives at least half a day in-house child protection training that takes place every September. This training supports the school procedures and staffs responsibilities within it.
- The complaints policy for parents and pupils now contains reference to the Commission for Social Care Inspection. There is now a Central record of complaints which is overseen by the Headmaster.
- There is now a planned response to a range of foreseeable major incidents or crises.

- Systems are in place that monitors equality of provision across boarding houses, especially gender. The recent refurbishment of Nanki has improved the boys boarding provision and future proposals to refurbish St Oswald's are exciting.
- A comprehensive prefects booklet makes all school prefects are aware of their responsibilities, particularly with regard to guidance on matters that they should pass up to the Deputy Head Pastoral.
- Improvements to the medication processes ensure that medication is administered safely.
- The catering provision has been further improved and now offers a wider and healthier choice of food.
- Staffing levels at nighttime have improved and are now adequate.

What they could do better:

- All aspects of self-administration of medication should be proactively assessed for each pupil wishing to do this and these assessments should be recorded. Arrangements for safe storage should be confirmed (creams and controlled medication). This will help staff look after the students better and help them understand how they can help you and keep you safe.
- Boarders should be provided with clear guidance about how they can report perceived overstepping of powers by prefects or House Captains. This guidance should be clear also to prefects and House Captains. This will help students feel confident about talking to a member of staff if they are unhappy with a prefect's action.
- There is a need to be more imaginative and develop the weekend activities. Particularly, the non-paid activities so all the boarders have the opportunity to try new experiences.
- Consultation is currently adequate although the School need to feedback information on the outcome of discussion and meetings to all the students.
- The privacy of payphones on some houses should be improved so students can use them to talk to family and friends in private.

- Those boarders' rooms that do not have locks on the doors should be provided with a secure lockable storage within their bedroom, so they can keep their valuable possessions safe.
- The School must ensure that there is an ongoing maintenance plan to combat any maintenance issues, such as making sure that all toilet door locks work.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' health is promoted. (NMS 6)
- Safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records. (NMS 7)
- Boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary.(NMS 15)
- Boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill.(NMS 16)
- Boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal Problems.(NMS 17)
- Boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.(NMS 25)
- Boarders are suitably accommodated when ill. (NMS 48)
- Boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.(NMS 49)

The Commission considers Standards 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, 48 & 49

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Boarders' health is sensitively and effectively promoted and relevant health and welfare needs of individual students are supported with access to medical, dental and optical services. A good standard of health care facilities and trained staff ensure first aid and minor illness treatment are available to boarders at all times and that significant health and personal problems of individual boarders are identified and managed appropriately.

Improvements still need to be made to both the storage and administration of medicines ensuring School policy is followed at all times so Student's welfare is safeguarded.

Boarders receive meals that are nutritious and good in both quantity and quality.

EVIDENCE:

Topics relating to personal, social and health education are explored with students through the School curriculum and informal discussions. Clear written information is made available to all students, which gives age appropriate guidance on alcohol, smoking and substance use and misuse.

Confidential Health Records are available for each boarder, held securely at the School. The nursing Sister maintains these records, which contain brief details of known drug reactions, allergies and medical conditions in respect of each young person. Parental contact details are kept within this system in the Medical Room and all were seen to be in place. All documentation is stored appropriately and within the medical ethics and guidelines.

There was evidence of good liaison between all staff, designed to ensure that relevant information is given to those who 'need to know' it. A system has been introduced to ensure that all staff with pastoral care responsibilities are involved in discussions about student's health care needs. This includes, meeting house staff on a 1:1 basis. For passing on of non-confidential more general information the School uses the staff email system and/or staff briefings.

All staff working in the Boarding Houses confirmed that Sister would inform them of any information that was relevant to students in their house. There are regular meetings and records maintained that ensure information is shared.

Staff described practice in line with the School's detailed policies and procedures that ensure that students are appropriately supported and individual issues managed sensitively, involving parents where appropriate. Students confirmed that they would be happy to talk to staff about health matters.

First aid and health care are provided to boarders through the 24 hour nursing presence on site and through regular GP surgeries at the school. All three nurses hold a First Aid qualification and all are registered nurses. There are both female and male GPs working in the local practice and one of the surgeries at the school is taken by a female GP. Where it is appropriate, appointments will be made at the GP practice to ensure a pupil can see a female doctor if this is preferred.

There have been significant improvements with both the storage and administration of medication since the last inspection. Prescribed medication is only given to the relevant boarder and this medication is kept within locked cabinets within the School medical room.

The School have developed a written protocol and guidelines on the use of Non Prescribed Medicines (Homely Remedies) which was written in conjunction with the School's GP. However, there was some evidence that this was not being followed in some instances. Currently the guidelines state that homely medication such as paracetamol is stored in the medication cabinet with in School and only administered by the School nurse. There has been on occasion paracetamol administered by a member of the house staff to a student within the boarding environment. The staff member did check with the nurse before administering this medication, but the paracetamol appeared to be from the staff members personal stock. A review of the Homely Remedies policy needs to be undertaken to assess whether the practice currently being used is the most effective approach. Once this review has been completed it is essential that the policy be followed stringently to safeguard the students.

All students throughout their schooling attend PSHE lessons that cover personal, social and health education. These lessons include input from the School Chaplain and professional bodies external to the School.

The storage arrangements have been improved with medication being stored in a locked cupboard. Currently there is a student who is taking 'Ritalin' which is a controlled drug. There are strict guidelines that need to be followed when storing and administering this medication. Ritalin needs to be stored in a locked cabinet within a locked cabinet (or a cabinet that has a double lock mechanism). When being administered it should be given by two people. One to witness that the correct dose is being given to the right young person, then these staff members are both required to sign the administration sheet or controlled drugs register.

All the external preparations are stored separately from the internal products, however these are not in a locked cupboard. These included various creams, olbas oil, and epi-pens. The inspectors also noted that the cough medicine was not stored within a locked cupboard. These items need to be stored within a locked cabinet.

The School has developed a risk assessment form to be used to assess any student who wishes to self-medicate. However, this was only used for a few students and the inspectors became aware from talking to the young people that more are self-medicating than documented. The School need to be more proactive at ensuring that they are informed of who would like to self-medicate, as they need to be aware of the type of medication being self-administered and more importantly that they enable student's to store their medication safely.

Written parental permission for the administration of first aid, appropriate medication and medical treatment was seen on all student's files inspected.

All of the nurses have completed first aid. The accident record book was examined and all accidents were recorded appropriately.

There is a Health and Safety Committee chaired by Deputy Head Pastoral. The Senior Sister attends this meeting, as does the Head of Games and Fire Liaison Officer. Minutes were sampled. Excellent example of action taken as a result of accidents reported. Evidenced effective and efficient lines of communication to ensure student safety.

The School is equipped with dedicated bedrooms for the care of young people who fall sick. This is located within the sick bay in main school. Students would be accompanied by the nurse at night should they require to sleep in sickbay.

All 6th yr girls, Yr 9 and lower 6th could describe the action they would take if they were taken ill over night, which would be to ring the doorbell to the Housemaster or mistress on duty overnight.

Students have tutors identified, to whom they can turn for support. These tutors mainly deal with academic issues, although they can also be approached with pastoral concerns. Those boarders who spoke to the inspectors reported that they felt supported and able to approach staff. Students spoken to generally felt able to talk to a wide selection of staff.

There are Tutor Meetings (for each Boarding House) that taken place twice a term and involve the Housemistress/master, Housemother, Assistant Tutor, Third Man and Tutors assigned to the pupils in that Boarding House.

There are also Housemasters Committee Meetings and Pastoral Committee Meetings. Pastoral staff can meet with student's individual tutors daily.

The School now has a written policy regarding welfare plans in the staff handbook. If staff become concerned about a student then a case conference is called. All staff relevant to the student would be invited to attend. Records demonstrated that staff were proactive in monitoring concerns. Records contained running records of concerns/incidents, contact with parents, minutes of meetings, actions to be taken, referrals to professionals external to the school and review dates.

Staff who were spoken to reported that they felt that the School was a close-knit and supportive community and that any welfare needs of any student would become known and be appropriately supported.

The School have just contracted out to an external company to undertake all catering processes. At the time of the inspection this new catering system was in its first weeks of operation. However, all students spoken to felt that the food had improved massively. The inspectors felt that the food was of good quality providing a balanced nutritious diet. A vegetarian option was available and the School were mindful about providing flexible options for overseas young people if they struggle with a British diet. There is a salad bar option and there was always fruit available.

Currently the food committee has been inactive, but the School will revive this committee once the new catering operation has been up and running. It was pleasing to see that the students had the opportunity to complete a comments card about how they find each meal. It would be good if the School were to ensure that there are always spare blank cards available.

Boarders have satisfactory access to drinking water in the boarding houses. The school has a tuck shop; this is open every day and appeared to offer a good selection of confectionary. Snacks may be prepared in the kitchenettes and kettles, microwaves and toasters are available within the Boarding houses.

The School's laundry facility appeared to be well managed and efficient. The students spoken to informed the inspectors that the laundry is usually turned around within 24 hours and none of the students reported any items coming back shrunk or damaged.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are protected from bullying.(NMS 2)
- Boarders are protected from abuse.(NMS 3)
- Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate.(NMS 4)
- Boarders' complaints are appropriately responded to.(NMS 5)
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- Boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school.(NMS 22)
- Boarders are protected from the risk of fire. (NMS 26)
- The welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school.(NMS 28)
- Boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities.(NMS 29)
- Boarders' personal privacy is respected.(NMS 37)
- There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders.(NMS 38)
- Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises.(NMS 39)
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. (NMS 41)
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards.(NMS 47)

The Commission considers Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39 & 41

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The School has made positive advances in their policies, procedures and practice in safeguarding their students. Staff are presently only selected following a tight vetting procedure and practical child protection is afforded a high priority. Pupils' rights are respected and their privacy is recognised but currently some of the student's bathrooms and toilets are without locks, which undermines the good practices, seen.

EVIDENCE:

The School works to a code of conduct rather than a list of rules encouraging students to aspire to the highest standards of behaviour and values. Ellesmere College has a full and comprehensive policy on countering bullying which covers necessary prevention, response and a definition. This policy is provided to parents, staff and boarders and is displayed around the School and within the Boarding houses. There are strategies in place for boarders to report relevant incidents through various means, which include a bullying box. Student's can complete a slip of paper identifying their concerns and then place this securely in the box. There was evidence on staff files examined that staff have undergone training around issues on bullying. All the boarders spoken to at the time of this inspection gave no indication, at all, that bullying was an issue at the School.

There is a policy available which is consistent with Shropshire's Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. Staff members spoken to confirmed that they had received regular INSET training provided by a range of people. Some staff have attended external Child Protection training. A response from the Local Authority Principle Officer, Child Protection stated that there were three Child Protection referrals from the School within the last two years. The School was criticised by the Safeguarding Board for how it handled one of these incidents. In discussion with the lead for Child Protection it was pleasing to hear that the School felt that they had learnt from this incident and in future would deal with all child protection concerns more proactively, by seeking advice from their local Safeguarding Board. The child protection lead for the School has attended a recent child protection course on protecting children from the Internet and he will also be attending a course on interagency working being run by the local Safeguarding Team. The School have also appointed a Governor who has responsibility for child protection. It would be good practice to enable this Governor to undertake professional external child protection training such as the course above.

School Prefects at Ellesmere are briefed on the subject during their induction training and are given clear guidelines. There is a full policy, included in the staff handbook, regarding required action should a boarder go missing. There have been no incidents of any Students going missing.

The School expects a high standard of behaviour will exist among boarders who actively wish to study at the School.

Students and staff were able to describe the School's use of punishments and rewards and felt that they were consistent and fair. Detention is the main form of punishment for those behaviours, which the School deems unacceptable. A record is kept of the reason for any detention.

A record of serious punishments is maintained by the Deputy Head Pastoral and is monitored by him to ascertain if any patterns or trend are occurring this is then overseen and signed off by the Headmaster. These records demonstrated that the systems in place were effective and punishments are generally used with a light touch.

Boarders are aware of the School's policies and procedures regarding certain 'non-negotiable' rules. They reported that they knew that girls were not allowed in boys' houses and vice versa, they knew that this was a punishable offence.

The School has a Restraint Policy, which they have never had to deploy. However not all staff were aware of this policy. It would be good practice to establish a process through team meetings where important policies were re-visited.

No unacceptable, excessive or idiosyncratic punishments were found to be employed.

A central Log is now maintained of all complaints and the complaints policy contains details of how to contact the Commission for Social Care Inspection. There have been no formal complaints made since the last inspection.

There is a thorough induction programme for School prefects and the inspectors felt that it would be good practice to ensure that all house prefects undertake the same inspection. The Deputy Head Pastoral facilitates the induction process and training. The prefects who were consulted during the inspection stated that they have clear roles and felt that they are positive role models and 'supporters' to the other students; the younger students spoken too stated that the prefects were usually fair when exercising their powers. The School still needs to supply the students with guidance about how they can report perceived overstepping of powers by prefects. However, it was considered that the prefects are respected and not feared at this school. The prefects now have a detailed handbook.

In addition to the School's Chaplain, students are encouraged to talk to Prefects. The School prefects go into the boarding houses specifically talk to all fifth form boarders about bullying. The School also feels that one of the most important ways in which students can be prepared for the future is to provide them with the opportunity to exercise leadership. The Prefect teams play an valuable role and make an essential contribution to the development of good working relationships between staff and students.

The School does not currently appoint educational guardians.

Full emergency evacuation procedures are available and have been tested from sleeping and living areas. Discussion with students and house staff confirmed that this takes place. Fire drills are regularly carried out and always take place twice each term. Emergency lighting, fire alarms and fire fighting equipment are regularly tested and records are maintained. Records were seen to indicate that the School has its fire detection and prevention systems maintained and checked by contracted agencies. Fire risk assessments and fire service reports were all held on file and the school were considered to be acting on recommendations made in their last Fire Inspection.

No other children apart from students are accommodated at the school therefore; Standard 28 does not apply at Ellesmere.

Activities identified as High Risk are subject to a detailed risk assessment. It is then the responsibility of staff involved to ensure that high-risk activities are competently supervised and accompanied by adequate and appropriate safety measures. Risk assessments seen were satisfactory. It was considered that adequate and appropriate safety measures were in place and it was reported that parental permission is obtained, in advance, at all times.

CCF activities are held at military bases and other centres that are used are licensed to do so.

Records of the recruitment process for ancillary and support staff for the School indicate that a systematic procedure have evolved over many years. Spouses and partners of teachers and other staff who live on campus are all required to undergo Criminal Records Bureau checks.

The School have taken references for all new staff members but have not in every case evidenced that they have made direct contact with both of the applicant's referees to verify the references. It would be good practice to ensure that this is evidenced in every case.

An improved Personal File Check List and a Recruitment Procedure has been introduced since the School was last inspected. A selection of staff files was examined and all new staffing files had evidence of CRB checks, references, interview notes copies of qualifications, employment history and Curriculum Vitae. The School also vets any adult that has contact with the young people, for example the Independent Counsellor.

The School has a satisfactory staffing rota in the boarding houses. This includes an appropriate balance of male and female staff. Staff supervision of boarders did not appear to intrude unnecessarily on boarders' privacy and no reports were received that there was any perceived intrusion. In all boarding houses that were visited on several occasions, it was evident that boarders considered their bedrooms to be their private space. The School plan to make more improvements to showers in the boy's boarding houses and this will improve privacy as well as improving the environment. There were several toilet doors however, that were missing locks. Ongoing maintenance needs to be more proactive at ensuring doors such as these can be locked to ensure that privacy is maintained at all times.

There are keypad access codes to the all the dormitories, the School should continue to be proactive and review its security and access to the student's house ensuring that the young people who board are safeguarded against any possible unwanted visitors.

Measures to ensure the security of the School from access by the public are in place. Risk assessments are undertaken to ensure that indoor and outdoor areas used by, or accessible to, boarders are free from reasonably avoidable hazards. Assessments of risk are undertaken and reviewed on an agreed basis.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.(NMS 14)
- Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination.(NMS 18)
- Boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.(NMS 27)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision to study.(NMS 43)
- Boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas.(NMS 46)

The Commission considers Standards 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

11, 14, 18, 27, 43 & 46

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Students' activity and recreational needs at Ellesmere are generally well met. There is no evidence of discrimination happening at the School. The School's helping ethos positively assists young people with any special needs. The young people are practically encouraged to achieve by having access to a choice of quiet spaces and work areas in which to study.

EVIDENCE:

Boarders are provided with range and choice of activities outside teaching time. Students reported that many sporting activities are available as well as paint balling and shopping. Many of the young people spoken to and some of the student's questionnaires identified however, that they felt that there was not enough activities on offer that they liked. The School have been reviewing activities particularly as overseas students need different stimuli to meet their cultural needs. The inspectors had many discussions with students who attend Ellesmere from the Far East. They identified that they do not attend many off-site paid activities. The School always provides a free on-site activity, however the inspectors felt that the School could be more imaginative and develop the weekend activities particular as the overseas student numbers are increasing.

Boarders can, and do, receive personal support from staff. Boarders reported that they could talk to their House Mistresses and House Masters about personal matters. While the tutor system is mainly concerned with academic matters, it was reported that tutors would feed back, as appropriate, to the pastoral staff within houses, in order to ensure that there was continuity of care for students. Reports received from boarders indicated that relationships are generally good or very good. Most feel able to talk with their tutors and other members of staff. Students were open and friendly and staff seemed to know students very well and be genuinely concerned for their welfare.

The posts of School Chaplain and Independent Counsellor also exist to provide support to boarders. Both of these roles are now integrated into the pastoral system and their lines of responsibility, supervision and input into the pastoral system are clear.

The School appeared to be committed to securing equality of opportunity through the criteria of an environment in which individuals are treated on the sole basis of their relative merits and abilities. There are clear procedures for dealing with any incidents of discrimination or harassment that have been significantly improved since the last inspection. Staff appeared to be fully aware of their responsibilities in respect of equal opportunities, harassment and discrimination on grounds of race, gender or disability. There was evidence that the Deputy Head Pastoral explores with the students the differences with regard to gender issues raised. For example, currently, Nanki does not have a common room. Therefore, the boys have to go to St Bedes to watch the TV. This means that they are allowed a slightly later time to return to their rooms. This is because they have to walk across the School courtyard. The time difference is minimal but the girls do from time to time perceive this to be unfair. The School now proactively ensure that the reasons 'why' are explained to any students so as to educate young people to live together.

The inspectors saw no evidence that demands made were excessive or unduly onerous. This was confirmed during discussions with boarders.

Inspectors observed suitable study facilities and staff supervision available to boarders during prep. Following the last inspection it was identified that given the height of most of the bedroom ceilings and the provision of cabin desks, advised that students' desks be checked to ensure that they are adequately lit for study or close work. As a result the School have provided all boarders with an individual table lamp.

Safe recreational areas have been provided, both indoors and out, for boarders. Students and staff were clear about the practice for supervising boarders' use of and access to areas within the School buildings and grounds. All students were aware of areas that were out of bounds and showed the inspectors the out of bounds maps that were placed on notice boards in each house. It was felt that areas were safe and provided boarders with activities and places they could go on their own or in a group.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school.(NMS 12)
- Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families.(NMS 19)
- New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in.(NMS 21)
- Boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school.(NMS 30)
- There are sound relationships between staff and boarders.(NMS 36)

The Commission considers Standards 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

12, 19, 21, 30 & 36

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The management and staff team are good at enabling both formal and informal opportunities for boarders to express their views with regard to the boarding provision. Views are taken into account in the development and practice of boarding. The students are generally well supported by boarding staff and enabled to retain positive links with their families, whether in England or abroad. Good induction and guidance for new boarders ensures they are able to settle in and feel welcomed.

EVIDENCE:

All boarding houses have House Committees and meeting minutes were sampled.

Roll Calls take place in all the houses twice a day. Each boarding house manages these slightly differently but it enables staff to touch base with students and discuss how their days have gone.

In interviews students felt that they are given the opportunity to express views on relevant aspects of their accommodation both formally and informally as individuals and as a group.

Staff informed Inspectors that there are House Committees, a Catering Committee and the Student Union. Student's views are also listened to in tutorials and Roll Calls.

The School has support systems to which students can turn for advice and guidance over personal matters. Students are able to identify a range of people available to them to talk to. These included people outside School as well as those inside the School.

Students are encouraged to maintain contact with family and friends through writing letters, sending e-mails and using the telephone or mobiles.

Students have access to pay phones located around the School, however some payphones do not offer privacy. This was especially the case in St Patrick's where the payphone is located at the entrance to the student's common room by the kitchen gallery. It is recognised that most students use mobile phones, however many overseas students prefer to use the payphones as they are cheaper. The School must ensure that all young people have access to a suitable payphone facility within their boarding house, especially as the overseas numbers are increasing.

Inspectors heard that all new students and parents are forwarded information about the School prior to their arrival. Students are given a range of information, which includes the Handbook for students and Parents. It would be good practice for the School to develop the student's handbook and make it more child and user friendly.

Students described effective and established procedures for introducing students into the School. New students felt the process had been informative and had helped them settle and become aware of rules and routines.

In interviews, discussions and questionnaires the majority of students confirmed that staff were supportive and helpful. They felt that staff made them feel welcome when they first arrived and would make themselves available to help them settle in, work towards becoming independent, listen to an individual's needs or address a concern.

Boarders are able to access information about events in the world outside the school in several ways. The boarding houses have a television in each common room and newspapers are provided. Boarders have access to computers and a number have mobile phones. It was noted that current issues of topical magazines were also available.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' possessions and money are protected.(NMS 20)
- Boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation.(NMS 40)
- Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation.(NMS 42)
- Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities.(NMS 44)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day.(NMS 45)
- Boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school.(NMS 50)
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 51)

The Commission considers Standard 51 the key standard to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The ethos of the school is one where trust is developed to an extent that personal possessions are respected and safely left alone. All students do not however, have secure places for the storage of valuables and money. The school accommodation strives to provide a warm and homely environment and atmosphere for boarding students. Some significant improvements have been made to the living environments, however it is still felt that the school have yet to fully achieve a desirable outcome for all boarding house. In places lack of ongoing maintenance could result in undermining the good standard of care that takes place there.

EVIDENCE:

There is a satisfactory system in place for providing and distributing pocket money and for looking after personal possessions and good records were seen to be maintained.

Some of the young people were able to lock their bedroom doors and thus able to secure any personal belongings if they wished. The locks on these doors could be overridden by a master key that all staff have. At the last inspection there were chains on the doors of St Oswald's that the School were asked to remove for reasons of health and safety. Some chains had been removed but not all. The School need to check all doors and where chains still exist they should be removed.

At the time of the inspection not all boarders were able to secure their possessions. The School must provide a secure lockable space for all boarders.

Sleeping accommodation across all boarding houses is suitably furnished. All areas were found to be of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of boarders accommodated. Some rooms were seen to have been personalised by the students occupying them. The general impression was that the rooms and dorms were a 'home from home' and that students were allowed and encouraged to create their own space.

The boy's boarding house Nanki has had major refurbishment undertaken to make all the bedrooms ensuite. By September this house will have a brand new corridor placed onto the front, which will also incorporate a common room and housemother's room.

Over the next three years major building work is placed to extend the girls sixth form accommodation and build a new girls boarding house, which in turn would enable the boys boarding accommodation to be expanded and further improved. All building and development work undertaken at the School is driven by a Development Plan, which is reviewed and up dated on a regular basis with the input of staff and School Governors.

There were still some privacy issues at this inspection, however the School had identified these. The School now has a new post of Director of Operations and the post had already made significant differences to maintenance issues.

Some of the screens that separate showers are see through. The School have already covered these to make them opaque, but the heat and condensation slowly removed the covering. The School have purchased a high tech product from Holland. This product arrived on the last day of the inspection and was beginning to be put on. The inspectors also found some of the toilet doors on several of the boarding houses were missing locks. The School need to ensure that ongoing checks by staff should take place to ensure that any deficiencies are raised and dealt with quickly.

It was raised at the last inspection that the School needed to ensure that the number of toilets available to boarders should meet minimum standards on each floor of each house and that hand basins should be provided in each toilet area.

The School have recognised that there is a deficiency and are tackling this by the major building works that are taking place over the next three years. Improvements had already been made to several of the boarding environments.

The changes that are taking place to the School boarding environment are exciting however; the School should ensure that ongoing everyday maintenance tasks are still needed to ensure that boarder's living environments are maintained to a good standard. The School let out their building during School holidays, whilst this provides good financial assistance to the School it is a risk of not allowing maintenance staff to undertake repair and decoration tasks. The School need to block some of these weeks to allow and enable scheduled and much needed maintenance work to take place within the School holidays.

There is a shop on site that sells sweets, sandwiches, hot sausage rolls, stationary, clothes and pot noodles. The School have recently changed their policy for students being allowed to put food onto the school bill. Parents have discussed this with the School and this has resulted in the change of practice.

No educational lodgings are arranged by the School to accommodate students. This standard does not apply to this inspection.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- There is clear leadership of boarding in the school.(NMS 8)
- Crises affecting boarders' welfare are effectively managed.(NMS 9)
- The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare.(NMS 10)
- Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare.(NMS 23)
- Boarders are adequately supervised by staff.(NMS 31)
- Staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site.(NMS 32)
- Boarders are adequately supervised at night.(NMS 33)
- Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training.(NMS 34)
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice.(NMS 35)
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

The Commission considers Standards 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

1, 8, 9, 10, 23, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 & 52

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Detailed written guidance, that includes a School Prospectus, is given to all parents, boarders and staff. There is clear and effective management and leadership of the practice and development of boarding in the School.

There are detailed effective risk assessments and procedures in place and known to staff to ensure the safety and welfare of students. The organisation of the boarding houses operates effectively and promotes the well-being, safety and adequate supervision of boarders.

EVIDENCE:

The School's statement of boarding practice meets all the requirements set out in the National Minimum Standards. It is presented in a style that makes it accessible to parents, boarders and staff. The pupil and parent booklet contains all the School's main policies and other information that actively reflects the boarding environment and practice.

The School has a management structure, with clear lines of accountability for the day-to-day management of the accommodation and welfare boarders through the role of the Deputy Head Pastoral. The practice and development are monitored through weekly meetings between the Deputy Head Pastoral, the Head Master and through weekly Senior Management Team Meetings. A termly report is presented, formally, to the Governors of the School, which includes reporting on welfare matters.

In interviews and discussions the Management Team demonstrated their awareness of events and issues. These are monitored during daily discussions and within a structure of regular meetings. The Senior Management Team meets weekly. Systems of communication and accountability are well understood and contact with senior members of staff is available over twenty-four hours a day.

The School has a Board of Governors, which meets regularly. Members include staff, parent and community members.

The Governing Body has a system for monitoring the School's welfare provision and development. Regular meetings take place that monitor the provision of boarding services.

The School has a comprehensive Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment Manual. There are planned responses to a range of foreseeable major incidents or crisis. Staff were able to describe the action they would take to ensure the health and safety of pupils in line with the School's policies and procedures.

The Headmaster and appropriate staff maintain a range of records. These records are regularly monitored and reviewed by the School's Management Team and in staff meetings. Minutes of these meetings demonstrated that the well being of pupils is promoted.

Staffing at the School ensures that pupils come into contact with staff of both genders. Levels of supervision are adequate. Boarders described satisfactory means of contacting a member of staff at night.

Job descriptions are in place for all staff, and the roles of spouses and partners of staff within boarding houses are made clear. Supervision of ancillary and cleaning staff takes place and the School is aware of its responsibilities in this area. There is an induction policy and guidance in place for staff. Ongoing training is provided to staff and training is evidenced in central file by way of staff evaluation forms.

All new staff who are appointed to start at the beginning of the academic year come in for a days induction prior to the first day of term. An agenda is set that insures they meet key staff within the school. Each staff member then discusses key topics.

Gap students all have received induction training over a 5-day period. They reported that staff were welcoming and supportive. Induction has involved three staff – line manager, education and welfare. It has covered a range of subjects including child protection, bullying, health and safety, education.

Staff described clear procedures that are followed in practice, when organising trips and holidays off School site. Action is taken where appropriate to check accommodation, staffing levels, qualifications and checks of staff employed by external companies used by the School.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable) **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls) **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
6	3
7	3
15	2
16	3
17	3
24	3
25	3
48	3
49	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	3
3	3
4	3
5	3
13	2
22	3
26	3
28	3
29	3
37	3
38	3
39	3
41	3
47	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
11	2
14	3
18	3
27	3
43	3
46	3

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	2
19	2
21	3
30	3
36	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
20	2
40	2
42	3
44	3
45	3
50	3
51	3

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

Continued

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
8	3
9	3
10	3
23	3
31	3
32	3
33	3
34	3
35	3
52	3

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? **YES**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	BS15	All aspects of self-administration of medication should be proactively assessed for each pupil wishing to do this and these assessments should be recorded. Outstanding Recommendation	15/04/07
2.	BS15	Arrangements for safe storage should be confirmed (creams and controlled medication). Outstanding Recommendation	15/03/07
3.	BS15	Review the current household remedies with the GP.	15/03/07
4.	BS15	The nursing staff should follow pharmaceutical guidance when administering any Controlled drugs.	28/02/07
5.	BS13	Boarders should be provided with clear guidance about how they can report perceived overstepping of powers by prefects or House Captains. This guidance should be clear also to prefects and House Captains. Outstanding Recommendation.	15/03/07
6.	BS11	There is a need to be more imaginative and develop, the weekend activities. Particularly the non-paid activities.	
7.	BS12	a formal system and process needs to be developed to feedback the outcomes of any consultation processes to all students.	

8.	BS19	The privacy of payphones on some houses should be improved Outstanding Recommendation.	15/04/07
9.	BS20	Door chains should be removed from rooms in St Oswald's Outstanding Recommendation.	15/02/07
10.	BS20	Those boarders' rooms that do not have locks on the doors should be provided with a secure lockable storage within their bedroom.	15/04/07
11.	BS40	The School must ensure that there is an ongoing maintenance plan to combat any maintenance issues	15/04/07
12.	BS40	The management need to ensure and ring fence certain weeks within the school holidays from being 'let'.	15/04/07
13.	BS3	All recommendations below are for good practice. It would be good practice to develop a good working practice with the local safeguarding board so staff feel confident in making earlier dialogue with this team to discuss any possible concerns or issues.	
14.	BS3	It would be good practice to enable the lead governor for child protection to undertake professional child protection training.	
15.	BS38	It would improve practice if the School were to evidence that they have made direct contact with both of the applicant's referees to verify the references.	
16.	BS13	Good practice to have similar induction processes for house prefects. There are differences between houses – would be good to formalise the process within each house.	
17.	BS4	Good practice to have ongoing meetings where important policies are discussed and explored to support staff.	
18.	BS21	It would be good practice for the School to develop the student's handbook and make it more child and user friendly.	
19.	BS34	It would be good practice to increase the formal staff induction processes to ensure that systems are develop in a more planned way.	

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