

The Leys

Inspection report for Boarding School

Unique reference number	SC015284
Inspection date	18/05/2011
Inspector	Joanne Vyas / Dorrit Andrews
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	The Leys, Fen Causeway, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB2 7AD
Telephone number	01223 508903
Email	hm@theleys.net
Registered person	Leys & St Faith's Foundation
Head/ Principal	Mark Slater
Nominated person	Mark Slater
Date of last inspection	04/03/2008

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services 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

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

Leys School is an independent, co-educational school, established in 1875. It is situated on the edge of Cambridge, set back from the main road, within extensive grounds.

The school offers boarding accommodation to pupils between the ages of 11 and 18 years. Home boarders, remaining on the premises for organised prep after formal lessons, are accepted as are day pupils. There are approximately 555 pupils in total from within and outside the United Kingdom of whom 270 board.

There are eight boarding houses in total and all with one exception are located within the school's grounds. The remaining boarding house, providing accommodation for junior pupils, is situated across the road from the school. Each house has a resident housemaster or housemistress, a day matron and resident assistant.

Boarders' sleeping arrangements range from single rooms to small dormitories. There is communal space in each boarding house and boarders are encouraged to participate in activities across the school community.

The school's extensive grounds provide a wide range of sporting and recreational opportunities. Facilities at the school have been developed and extended during recent years to meet changing needs.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this full announced inspection all key standards were inspected.

Boarding staff are competent, caring and professional. They provide exceptional care for boarders and meet their individual needs with the knowledge and understanding they have of them. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff are focussed and committed to ensuring a high quality provision for health care for all boarders. Boarders are provided with meals that are adequate in quantity and quality. Boarders are provided with a range of opportunities to express their views. They are happy and confident and reported that they feel safe while boarding. The boarders are protected by extensive fire procedures and risk assessment. They are accommodated in a range of boarding accommodation varying in condition from satisfactory to excellent. The senior management team ensure the quality of boarding through continuous monitoring and evaluation of the school. A boarder said, 'I love boarding. It's a lot of fun and I always feel included'.

Improvements since the last inspection

The school have complied with both the recommendations made at the previous inspection. A written agreement is now in place between the school and any adult not employed by the school but living in the same building as boarding accommodation, to ensure these adults comply with the ethos of the school. Parents and pupils have been informed of the arrangements for the public use of the sports hall via the parent handbooks.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff are focussed and committed to ensuring a high quality provision for health care for pupils boarding at this school. They are proactive and responsive to the emotional and health care needs of boarders and there is exemplary practice with regards to staff awareness and training for individual boarders healthcare needs. Additionally, the medical centre is staffed with registered nurses who are accessible day and night during term time. The nurses, under the guidance of the local doctors, run an efficient medical service for the boarders. This includes regular access to a doctor of their choice, a counselling service and psychiatrist as required. Records of healthcare are comprehensive and regularly updated to ensure staff have access to the most current information. Medical records are kept confidential, on a need to know basis.

The safe handling of medication is well managed in this school. Medication that is prescribed is given out by the nursing staff, which is securely stored in the medical centre. Homely remedies are also securely stored within the medical centre and appropriate procedures are in place for consent and administration. Accidents and injuries are appropriately treated and recorded by staff who are trained in first aid.

Boarders are provided with meals that are adequate in quantity and quality. Boarders report that although breakfast and lunch are fine, the suppers and meals at the weekend are poorer in quality and choice. All pupils dine centrally in a pleasant hall that is too small to cater for the whole school at one sitting. Therefore, meal times at lunch and supper can be busy. The school recognises these issues and are committed to ensuring continual development and improvement. Additionally, the school's catering manager meets with student committees to discuss catering issues and how they can be further improved. Allergies and special dietary requirements are known and suitably provided for and there have been no concerns relating to environmental health issues.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The protection and safety of boarders is positively promoted. Staff are focused on ensuring that the school is a safe place to be and that action is taken to ensure

boarders are protected from harm. Boarders reported that they feel safe at the school and were observed to be confident, happy and relaxed around staff. The designated child protection officer has strong links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board ensuring practice at the school remains current. All staff receive training on safeguarding during their induction and at regular intervals thereafter. Boarders clearly know and understand that the school does not tolerate bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying. They are provided with good instruction on the safe use of the internet. Boarders report that bullying occurs rarely and staff always address bullying behaviour. There is a clear expectation of behaviour, which the boarders understand and follow. Boarders said that the rules and punishments are fair.

Boarders said that their privacy is respected by boarding house staff. Parents and boarders are aware of the complaints procedure. There are numerous opportunities for boarders to air their concerns. Boarders said there are a number of staff they would feel happy to approach with any concerns they may have. Boarders are clear about the fire evacuation procedures. Fire practices are carried out on a regular basis and at different times of the day and night. Boarders are provided with a safe and well maintained environment, for example, risk assessments are thorough and focus on the safety of boarders.

Boarders are protected from public intrusion. All visitors to the boarding houses are kept under staff supervision and not allowed unreasonable access to boarders or boarding accommodation. Boarding accommodation and facilities are for the exclusive use of boarders. The school has a strong policy restricting access to boarding facilities and boarders by people from outside the school. Significant improvements have been made to security measures to prevent unauthorised access to boarding houses and the school grounds. These are continually reviewed and improved to ensure boarders are safe.

Boarders are protected by comprehensive procedures for the selection and vetting of staff. All staff and adults living at the school but are not employed by the school, are subject to appropriate vetting procedures such as a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure certificate at enhanced level.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders receive an outstanding level of pastoral care. A parent said, 'The pastoral care and support to my children, and the family, through various difficulties, has been outstanding. I cannot recommend it highly enough'. All boarders said that they can approach a number of staff for help and support. A boarder notably said, 'Our housemaster gave up some of his free time to help us with exam prep at the weekend; I felt a lot more confident after this'. They have met and know how to contact their independent listener and counsellor. The school's international mentor ensures all boarders from overseas are successfully inducted into the school; the intention being to emphasise integration and the full benefits of being at the school.

Boarders with special needs are comprehensively supported to ensure they can fully access the full experience of boarding and the facilities the school provide. Boarders who have suffered personal trauma, for example bereavement, have been provided with a high level of support given by an experienced and competent team of staff.

Boarders have a good understanding of personal, social and health issues. Appropriate advice and guidance is given on topics such as smoking, alcohol, drugs, sexual relationships, citizenship, bullying, homophobia, eating disorders and internet safety. External speakers who are specialists in particular fields are also invited to speak on various topics, for example, a reformed drug user and her mother spoke to both pupils and their parents at the school. The school has a policy in place on illegal drugs, substance abuse and alcohol.

There are a wide range of extra-curricula activities on offer for boarders which they thoroughly enjoy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders have access to facilities in the local community and do fundraising events. There is a good range of newspapers available. Boarders can also watch television, listen to the radio and have supervised access to the internet in order to keep up with local, national and international affairs. Boarders confirm that they are able to maintain regular, private contact with their families and friends via the house phone, mobiles, email and through the internet such as video phone. Boarders report there are a range of opportunities, both formal and informal, where they can contribute to the operation of the boarding provision, for example, the junior and senior school committees and visits made by the headmaster to their boarding house. They believe their views are listened to and valued.

The induction of new boarders and their families is a strength of this school. It is comprehensively and sensitively managed as well as thoughtfully matched to the individual needs of each new boarder. A new boarder described their housemistress as, 'really really caring'. A parent said, 'They have shown my children care and compassion as well as understanding and discipline. My children love the boarding aspect to the school and my younger child settled in very quickly to such an alien experience'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarders are accommodated in a range of boarding houses varying in condition from satisfactory to excellent. All accommodation is, at least, functional and a number of houses have recently benefitted from an excellent refurbishment programme. However, this is a source of frustration for boarders whose houses have not yet been refurbished. The school actively recognises that some boarding areas, in particular

the boys' houses, are in need of refurbishment. There is an operational plan in place to address the developmental needs of the boarding provision. The houses that have been refurbished are modern, bright and innovative.

Boarders are provided with good study facilities. Study bedsits at sixth form level are mostly shared in the lower sixth with single study bedsits in the upper sixth. All rooms offer ample individual space and lockable separate storage. Communal areas are well maintained and provide sufficient space for all boarders to convene and relax in. All boarding houses are equipped with kitchen facilities for the preparation of snacks by boarders.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a clear statement of boarding principles and practice and there are rigorous monitoring procedures in place. Quality assurance systems are extensive which effectively contribute towards the welfare of boarders. A large number of Ofsted questionnaires were returned by the boarders and their parents where the majority were complimentary about the school. Boarders benefit from a well managed and established staff team who deliver a high standard of care. Staff are motivated and enthusiastic. The relationships between the boarders and the staff is a real strength of the school. Staff are provided with a high level of training and state that the appraisal process in place is effective in supporting their professional development within the boarding sector of the school. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Boarders are unanimous in their views that the school makes every effort to recognise their individual needs and value their differences.