

Chafyn Grove School

Inspection report for boarding school

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| Date of last inspection | 28/11/2007 |

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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

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| 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

This is a co-educational day and boarding school catering for children aged two and a half to 13 years. Boarding provision is available for pupils aged seven to 13 years. At the time of the inspection the school had 50 boarders and 292 pupils in total. The boarding accommodation consists of a number of dormitories, sitting rooms and recreational areas around the school. The school also has a pre-preparatory school but none of these pupils board. The school is situated in a city, close to all local amenities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This inspection was an announced full inspection. As part of the inspection process questionnaires were sent to parents and boarders to gain their views. Responses received were extremely complimentary. The boarding provision is of a good standard with many outstanding outcomes in some areas. Boarders are looked after by an extremely dedicated and committed staff team who continue to review and update their practice to ensure boarders are safe, happy and live in a nurturing and stimulating environment. The school's core ethos of respect, kindness, honesty, forgiveness and tolerance is clearly present in the day-to-day work at the school. The boarders at the school are a credit to themselves and the school. Both boarders and their parents are very positive about boarding life at the school.

There are some gaps in the records of the required checks of fire equipment but a new system has addressed this. However, the propping open of fire doors could pose a risk to boarders. There are also gaps in two of the staff personnel files inspected. The school has not implemented a staff appraisal system for all staff.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the school has obtained written permission from all pupils' parents for the administration of medication, first aid and emergency medical treatment. Ofsted contact information now forms part of the school's complaints policy. Weekly tests of fire call points are carried out on a rotating basis and a record is kept.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The promotion of boarders' health care is excellent. The school's personal, social and health education programme is exceptional, not only covering all the required topics but it is also reactive to current events. The themes from these lessons are carried across the whole school. Young people said they really enjoyed these lessons. Input from external agencies is included in this programme.

Boarders' health care is excellent. The school nurse oversees all matters relating to health and medication with assistance from the house parents and matrons. All staff have the required level of qualification, which is frequently updated. There is also a significant number of other staff in the school with a first aid qualification.

Boarders' health is protected and promoted by safe storage and administration of medication. Comprehensive records and procedures are in place for this purpose. These include very detailed welfare plans for those pupils who require them. Permission and consent forms from parents for the administration of medication, first aid and emergency treatment are in place for all pupils. Medical information on pupils is shared on a need-to-know basis. Boarders said that staff look after them very well if they are ill. The sick bay is well furnished and welcoming. There is a call bell system for pupils accessing the sick bay.

The catering provision at the school is of a high quality and provides boarders with a balanced, nutritious and varied diet. The dining hall is pleasantly furnished and promotes interaction over meals. All staff involved in the provision of meals are appropriately trained and the appropriate records are maintained. There are no outstanding issues from the last environmental health officer visit in 2010 when the school received a four star rating. Boarders at the school are very positive about the catering and say there is plenty of access to snacks and drinks throughout the school and in the evening.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Boarders are protected and their welfare promoted through the school's robust approach, not only in addressing all aspects of bullying, including cyber bullying, but also the comprehensive anti-bullying work that is undertaken with the pupils. This includes the personal, social and health education programme. Boarders said that any form of bullying is taken very seriously and staff will always act immediately. They said there was very little bullying at the school.

The welfare of the pupils is the central driver of the school and it provides the boarders with a stable and safe environment in which to live. Boarders said their privacy is respected by staff, who are sensitive when entering dormitories or bathroom areas. All staff have an excellent understanding of the needs of the

individual boarders and how to safeguard them. There are excellent safeguarding procedures in place which are in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. All staff have received safeguarding training at appropriate levels, which is regularly updated. The school's designated child protection officer has received in-depth safeguarding training and has a clear understanding of changing guidance and legislation. They ensure this information is shared with all staff and maintain good links with the local safeguarding professionals. All visitors to the school are given a safeguarding briefing and asked to sign up to this.

The school's ethos on behaviour stems from the school code which promotes tolerance, forgiveness, patience, respect, honesty and 'treat others as you would like to be treated'. The school celebrates and positively reinforces good behaviour and pupils' achievements with rewards and incentives including verbal praise, giving stars for work within the curriculum, merits and the recently introduced 'good works' certificates. The behaviour of the pupils is exceptional. Boarders said that they had a clear understanding of the rules at the school and that punishments were fair; also breaches during the school day do not carry over into the boarding time. There is a strong sense of community within the school and boarders demonstrate a very caring attitude towards their fellow pupils.

There is a robust complaints policy and procedure of which boarders, staff and parents have a clear understanding. All complaints are responded to quickly and comprehensive records are kept. The contact details for Ofsted are contained within the policy.

The school operates a system of Year 8 leaders, head boy/girl and head of boarding. These young people are provided with clear guidance on their roles and responsibilities, the main one being role models.

Although the school has the appropriate policies and procedures to protect young people in the event of fire, there are some gaps in the recording of some of the required fire safety checks. This has been addressed with a recently implemented recording system. Also during the inspection a number of designated fire doors were propped or wedged open. This should not happen as it compromises safety. Fire drills have been carried out at the required intervals and both staff and young people were very clear on the action to be taken in the event of the fire alarms sounding.

The school has an appropriate recruitment policy but there are some gaps in the information held within two of the five staff personnel files inspected. This relates to the school not obtaining Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for staff who have been employed by the school prior to the CRB check being in existence, and moving from one post to another. Although these staff had the correct checks carried out at the time their employment commenced, where there is a significant increase in their contact with boarders a CRB is required.

Boarders are protected through various security measures. Boarding accommodation is reserved solely for the use of those boarders designated to it. All boarding areas are suitably protected by the use of window restrictors, key pads and locks.

The school has robust health and safety policies and procedures to ensure pupils are protected from risk. Risk assessments are detailed and cover all required aspects. These are frequently reviewed and updated. The school also employs an external consultant who carries out some of the risk assessments and monthly audits of the school's health and safety provision.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders have access to an incredible range of activities and a wide range of facilities. Boarders said that the activities on offer are fantastic and the staff put on extra special activities at weekends. They said they are encouraged to put forward ideas for activities and wherever possible staff would arrange these for them. They particularly like the fact that staff join in activities with them.

The individual support provided for boarders by the school is excellent; this includes both boarding and academic staff, for example, the house parents, gap students, matrons, special educational needs coordinator, nurse and school counsellor. Boarders see the tutor system as very important. Boarders also have access to independent listeners and their contact details are known to the boarders but are also in their pupil organiser and on notice boards. Pupils see learning support as just another part of the education process.

The core values of equal opportunity and equality and diversity run throughout the school's ethos. Individuals are valued and diversity is celebrated. Individualised support provided to boarders is sensitive to specific cultural or personal welfare needs. Appropriate arrangements are made for boarders whose first language is not English. Excellent provision is made for boarders with any special dietary or religious observance requirements. Boarders are fully integrated into both school and boarding life.

There are no onerous demands placed on pupils and due to the in-depth knowledge the staff have of the young people they care for, any signs of stress are quickly identified and action taken.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Within the school there are excellent systems for consultation with boarders. These include school council, the Year 8 leaders system, surveys, a suggestion box and one-to-one or group boarding meetings. Boarders said that these systems are very effective and were able to give a large number of examples where things had been changed through their representations. Boarders are also fully involved in the development and review of their individual education plans and welfare plans.

Boarders are enabled and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents, families and friends. The methods for achieving this are through the telephone, email and internet communication. Year 8 pupils are able to have mobile phones. Parents who responded to Ofsted questionnaires said that communication was very good and they felt fully involved in their children's school life. There are also frequent newsletters and for those parents who live overseas, boarding staff send them photos of events. The school holds open evenings for parents; these are social events and aid the free flow of information. Staff feel these events help to build up relationships with parents which can be beneficial especially if any issues arise. The school has appointed parent representatives. These two people act as a point of call and support for parents. They said they have also been used by some parents to raise questions with the school.

There is an excellent induction system which boarders said helped them settle in when they first arrived. This includes taster days and events and comprehensive written information. The parent representatives also arrange social evenings for new families. Boarders particularly like the buddy system. They said it was like having a friend at the school as soon as you arrive.

The relationship between the boarders and the staff is a real strength of the school. Boarders said that staff are always there for them, fun to spend time with and look after them really well. Some said the house parents are like having a second set of parents.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarders' possessions and monies are protected and all boarders have lockable storage. Young people and staff say there is no theft in the school.

The boarding accommodation is well lit, heated and ventilated. All the dormitories and communal areas are welcoming, clean, and decorated and furnished in a comfortable, homely fashion. The communal space has increased since the last inspection. Boarders are able to personalise their bed space and all have ample storage space. Boarders all said they like their dormitories and they are asked who they would like to share with. They also said that they are able to swop dormitories if they wish and they like the fact that dormitories change every term. There are lots of pictures around the school of pupils and events they have been involved in.

There is an appropriate number of toilets, baths/showers and wash basins for the number of boarders accommodated. Some of these facilities have recently been refurbished and the remainder are scheduled for refurbishment. This includes bathrooms, one on the boys' floor and one on the girls' floor, where the privacy is not appropriate in the bathing area.

There are appropriate changing facilities in the school which include a newly

developed changing area for the girl boarders in the boarding house which is of a high standard.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of boarding principles and practice is comprehensive. It is readily available to parents, boarders and staff and accurately reflects the current boarding provision and practice. In addition, boarders have their own pupil planners which incorporate routines and expectations.

There is clear leadership of the practice and the development of boarding within the school. There are systems in place to monitor the required records and, with the exception of the gaps in the fire records and minor gaps in the recruitment files, this system is effective. The senior staff group has a wide range of experience and staff strive to ensure that boarders' welfare is safeguarded and promoted. The staff team as a whole is very committed to the young people in their care with the young people coming first and foremost in their work.

There is a robust crisis management structure in place which covers all the required areas. The organisation of the boarding house greatly contributes to the boarders' welfare. All educational staff are involved in the boarding life and thus there is a holistic approach and understanding of the care provided to the boarders. The commitment of the staff team to the young people is exceptional. The communication between the staff team is excellent but also operates on a need-to-know basis where appropriate. The boarding is divided by gender and age and there are no discrepancies between the boarding provision. Parents were very positive and complimentary about the boarding staff. One parent said that apart from themselves they could not think of better people to look after their child.

There is a high level of staff supervision which reflects the high standard of care the young people receive and allows for individual time with young people which they really enjoy; boarders thrive and flourish in this environment. There is a duty rota posted on notice boards so boarders always know who is on duty day and night. A call bell system is in operation so young people can summon staff quickly during the night.

The system of staff induction is comprehensive and there is an additional gap survival guide for gap students which they find very helpful. The staff team are very well trained and there is a programme of updates to ensure their knowledge is kept current. There are regular staff meetings and communication between the staff team is excellent. Staff say there is a high level of informal support from colleagues and the senior management team. However, the school has not fully implemented a staff appraisal system.

The school's guidance on boarding practice is very comprehensive and regularly reviewed and updated. This information is available on the school's intranet and

some of this is also on the school website. This document reflects the current boarding practice and is cross referenced to supporting documentation.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. These two ideals are enshrined throughout the ethos and work of the school. The school's guidance, 'A Way To Live', reflects this as does the mantra 'treat others as you would like to be treated'. Equality and diversity are also at the core of the personal, social and health education programme. The school is a real community where individuality is promoted and respected.

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 designated fire doors are not wedged or propped open (NMS 26)
- ensure the performance of each member of staff is appraised by a senior member of staff on a regular basis (NMS 34.5)
- ensure that an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check is obtained for any member of the staff team who was in post prior to this expectation, if they change their role within the school which involves a significant increase in their contact with young people. (NMS 39)