

# Five Islands School Boarding House St Mary's

Church Road, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, TR21 0NA

<b>Inspection dates</b>	26/09/2013	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>3</b>
Outcomes for boarders	Outstanding	1
Quality of boarding provision and care	Adequate	3
Boarders' safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management of boarding	Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings

### The boarding provision is adequate because

- Boarders are happy and thriving, they describe the boarding house as a second home. Telling inspectors that they get on with and all help one another, like 'one big family'. They feel listened to, and the nurturing provided by the main carers is instrumental in the success of their boarding experience.
- The school has undergone significant changes to the senior management structure. The need to improve the boarding provision has been acknowledged and a full review of this service is to take place. Many of the issues identified during this inspection are historical and systems have been put in place or are planned to address these.
- The boarding facility has not experienced appropriate prominence in the school. This has led to a lack of proper oversight and reporting. Staff do not receive the support, training and supervision required to ensure they fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- The boarding facility provides outstanding outcomes. It is a crucial service for boarders who would otherwise face serious disadvantage from social isolation and education attendance issues. The positive experiences of boarders are compromised by a lack of investment which has seen a gradual deterioration in the boarding environment.
- There are shortfalls in ensuring boarders' safety. This includes insufficient detail in recruitment records, on-going maintenance issues affecting fire doors and a lack of up-to-date, robust policy documents to support and improve safeguarding and behaviour management practice.

### Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for boarding. The details are listed in

the full report.

## Information about this inspection

The school was given notice of this inspection. Views were sought from boarders, young adults who previously boarded and parents. Discussions were held with staff both at the school and in the boarding provision. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised policies, records and documentation. All residential accommodation was viewed, meals eaten with students and relationships and interactions were carefully observed. Pre-inspection surveys and Parent View responses were evaluated.

## Inspection team

Janice Hawtin	Lead social care inspector
Sharron Escott	Social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

The Five Islands School is an all-age, multisite, voluntary controlled Church of England School, serving the Islands of Bryher, St Martins, St Marys, St Agnes and Tesco. As part of its commitment to the education of secondary aged children the Islands Council provides a boarding house, Mundesley on St Mary's, for children from the off-islands. Five Islands School is therefore a Maintained Boarding School and subject to inspection under the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. The school provides weekly boarding for boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years. Children return home for weekends and all school holidays. Mundesley is a combination of an original house and extension and provides accommodation consisting of dormitory bedrooms, with more individual arrangements for senior students. Girls are accommodated on the first floor and boys on the ground floor. There are toilet and bathing provision on each floor level together with a dining room and lounge on the ground floor. There is a kitchen from which breakfast and evening meals are prepared and served to boarders. Lunchtime meals are provided at school. After Year 11 studies are completed students wishing to continue on to further education have to follow courses on the mainland.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the belongings or resources used by other groups or individuals are not left in the boarding house during school terms.
- Ensure that all new boarders practice fire drills on admission, and that evacuation records include the names of all those taking part.
- Complete an annual review of the fire risk assessments.
- Provide guidance for staff around recording safeguarding allegations made by children.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools.**
  - Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders with restricted mobility. (NMS 5.4)
  - Accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of boarders accommodated, with appropriate protection and separation between genders, age groups and accommodation for adults. Bedding is clean and suitable, and is sufficiently warm. (NMS 5.5)
  - The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. (NMS 6.2)
  - Boarders have access to a range and choice of safe recreational areas, both indoors and outdoors, and there are safe areas at school where boarders can be alone if they wish. (NMS 10.2)
  - The school has and consistently implements a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils. This policy includes: measures to combat bullying and to promote positive behaviour; school rules; disciplinary sanctions; when restraint is to be used; and arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions. (NMS 12.1)
  - There is clear management and leadership of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between academic and

residential staff. (NMS 13.1)

- The records specified in Appendix 2 (Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards) are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (NMS 13.3)
- Schools operate safe recruitment procedures and vet staff in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance (as referenced in 'Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards') issued by the Secretary of State. (NMS 14.1)
- Any person employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding. (NMS 15.1)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for boarders

### Outstanding

Outcomes for boarders are outstanding; based on the quality of relationships with the main carers and the opportunities available. Without this provision they would face significant disadvantage compared with peers, and school attendance dependant on the weather and the condition of the sea. Boarders told us that the boarding house provides a second home, that they get on well with one another 'like one big family'. They enjoy spending time together, feeling that they benefit from the careful mix of boarders sharing bedrooms.

Boarders come from outlying islands to use this facility; which parents describe as 'crucial'. They would otherwise be socially isolated and unable to enjoy the many extra-curricular activities and social events on offer. One young person told us 'only one other person of a similar age to me lives on my island, but in the boarding house and on the main island I have lots of friends.'

The lives of boarders are enriched through the wealth of activities on offer. All are involved in varying degrees in the many activities on offer. Amongst some of the activities on offer they enjoy gig racing/rowing, music lessons, youth clubs, belong to uniformed organisations and get involved in community charity events. The range of activities offer excitement, learning and skills development, alongside opportunities to socialise and contribute to the wider community. All will need to move to the mainland to take up further education opportunities. Boarders told us, and parents confirm, that the boarding experience helps to develop confidence and independence which prepares the young people for further education and adult life. They have already overcome any home sickness or separation anxiety and are used to taking responsibility for their belongings. They have also learnt to live alongside peers, to share and consider carefully and together matters which affect them all, such as food choices, use of leisure equipment or choice of television programme. They take on additional responsibilities such as organising the Christmas party or taking care of the livestock.

Boarders are instrumental in keeping themselves fit, they walk or cycle around the island, use the gym equipment in the house and partake in sporting activities in the wider community. All are registered locally with professional health services and report that they can readily talk to one of the main carers if they have any concerns, including health and well-being issues. Boarders 'feel safe' and have a strong sense of well-being both within the house and out in the wider community.

Boarders feel valued and listened to. They have regular meetings with the main carers and affect changes in menus, activities and charity involvement. They often sit together and are encouraged to develop an understanding of the wider world. Carers introduce topical news items and open discussions. One of the main carers is also a qualified teacher and boarders make use of the support and guidance available to help with course and homework. Education attendance is sustained and achievement is monitored by the carers during the school week to ensure young people complete homework and coursework. Young people make a positive transition to further education.

### Quality of boarding provision and care

### Adequate

There is an appropriate process of induction and transition for new boarders. Home visits, guidance about the facility, and opportunities to visit the boarding house provide sufficient information and opportunities for discussion to potential boarders and parents.

Carers work in partnership with parents to help boarders settle or overcome any home sickness, this includes parents visiting and spending time with their children during the week, or additional

phone calls late at night, in fact whatever it takes to make boarders feel safe, secure and nurtured.

Young people who boarded last year confirmed the good quality of care they received, and spoke enthusiastically and excitedly about their time as boarders. They are currently studying on the mainland and feel their experiences and the support they had to live independently from their parents during school time has given them an advantage. Relationships between them and carers (as with current boarders) are clearly based on mutual respect and genuine affection.

Boarders explained that they can tell one of the main carers anything 'some things we might be embarrassed to tell our parents', they also carry mobile phones and have access to a phone in the boarding house on which to contact someone independent of the house and school if necessary. An independent advocate is also available. These arrangements contribute to the sense of safety and security felt by boarders.

The range of community based leisure activities are exceptional. Individual talents are supported, such as drama and music lessons and team sports. Participation by boarders is good and this develops their social and practical skills as well contributing to their emotional and physical well-being. Care for boarders who are sick is appropriate; parents are always contacted and most return home. Health needs are identified in medical records and the carer responsible for medical issues seeks guidance and training from health professionals when needed. Recently this has involved dealing with diabetes and anaphylactic shock medication.

Meals provided are suitably nutritious and varied and there is a substantial amount of choice. Account is taken of special dietary needs including allergies and food preferences. Boarders can access a range of snacks and drinks in-between meals.

Boys and girls have separate sleeping accommodation and bathroom facilities. Boarders are encouraged to and have personalised their bedrooms. Laundry facilities and arrangements are suitable. Carers will wash items if necessary, although the majority of laundry including bedding is taken home to parents each weekend.

Neither boarders nor parents mentioned any issues relating to the boarding environment. However most areas are in need of repair, decoration and/or refurbishment. Historically there has been a lack of investment in the boarding house and current grants are insufficient to complete the work needed. It is noteworthy that through no fault of the school, decorators employed to work through the recent school holidays failed to turn up. The head of care is relentless in his pursuit of improvements and continues to chase repairs and re-fabrication. The current boarding provision would not be of a sufficient size to accommodate the numbers of boarders for which the house is registered. It is currently only accommodating around half of this number and would be considered inappropriate should numbers increase. In addition, the games room is full to capacity with resources, limiting the number of boarders who can make use of it at any one time. A full review of these and other boarding issues is being planned and aimed to be completed within the current school year.

## **Boarders' safety**

## **Inadequate**

Not all safeguarding standards have been met. There are shortfalls in recruitment records, policy documents to support safeguarding practice and maintenance issues.

Boarders report that they feel safe both in the boarding house, school and out in the community. They confirm that they can talk to a variety of adults in confidence, and feel that carers in the home look out for them and act in their best interests. Although very rare, incidents of hurtful behaviour between residents do occur, this is not sustained. There is a policy for countering

bullying so that staff act to deal with any issues effectively. Incidents are dealt with before they become serious and the carers promote an environment of mutual respect between boarders who confirm 'there are no incidents of bullying'.

Care staff are consistent in managing poor behaviour, through clear expectations, modelling behaviour, support and guidance. They deal with issues as they arise to avoid escalation, and apply reasonable sanctions where needed. Policies and recording procedures do not support the current care practice. For example there is not a behaviour management plan in place for all boarders, and sanctions are not recorded in the book kept for this purpose. The rationale for physical intervention is clear to care staff, these techniques have not been used in the boarding environment. Staff are not trained in the safe use of restraint techniques and if used by untrained staff boarders could be at risk of injury.

The school is unable to demonstrate safer recruitment practice. Although all staff have criminal records checks, not all have records of identity checks, history of employment or two references. This system is not robust and increases the risk of inappropriate adults working with children.

Staff are aware of factors which trigger children going missing. Children do not go missing from this home and the main care staff are clear about the action to take should this occur. Missing from home policies do not provide adequate and detailed guidance for other care staff should the main carers not be available and an incident occurs.

Regular maintenance is not carried out in a timely manner to protect boarders. Several fire doors were found to be ineffective. These issues which had been identified and reported by the head of care were addressed during the inspection. Boarders are made aware of escape routes in the event of a fire. Not all new boarders have practised an emergency evacuation, which would further prepare them in the event of a fire.

A record of visitors to the boarding house is kept, and care staff's supervision of visitors avoids them having unsupervised access to boarders.

## **Leadership and management of boarding**

## **Inadequate**

The school has experienced a period of significant change to the leadership and management arrangements. A new head teacher and deputy have recently been appointed and have been in post for three weeks, this follows months of interim arrangements and uncertainty. A number of national minimum standards have not been met.

There is an acknowledgement that formal links between the school and boarding provision are ineffective in providing proper oversight and have not provided the support, supervision or training for all care staff to meet current standards. Records of recruitment, staff supervision, appraisal and training and sanctions are not all completed, well maintained or monitored. In addition the school has not made satisfactory progress in addressing all previous requirements.

Most strengths and weaknesses of the service are known and action to address these is planned, many of these plans have yet to be implemented and/or embedded in practice. However there is a renewed enthusiasm and determination to improve, and the school are currently working with improvement officers and safeguarding officers to address issues and improve policy and practice.

A plan is in place to complete a full review of the boarding provision, this is to be put out to tender, and it is hoped will be completed before the start of the next school year. Meanwhile some links are being maintained or improved. These include weekly meetings with the head of pastoral care and a steering group for the boarding provision consisting of school, boarding staff



and governors. The Director of People's Services has close links with, and is supportive of the boarding provision, and there is an appointed link governor to ensure the boarding service is represented in school meetings. These arrangements are intended to give the boarding provision suitable and improved prominence within the school.

The aims and objectives of the school's boarding principles, what facilities it provides and practice, clearly defined in information available to parents and staff. The main carers have suitable experience to care effectively for boarders. Significant events relating to the protection of children have been notified appropriately by the main carer to the schools designated officer in line with current policy.

The experience and contentment of boarders is not evidently affected by the shortfalls in leadership and management.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133554
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC042065
<b>DfE registration number</b>	420/3005

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	State, voluntary controlled
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	14
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	11 to 16
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Linda Todd
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	09/07/2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01720 423277
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@fiveislands.scilly.sch.uk

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