

Shaftesbury School

Shaftesbury School, Salisbury Road, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 8ER

Inspection dates	04/06/2014 to 06/06/2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for boarders	Outstanding	1
Quality of boarding provision and care	Good	2
Boarders' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of boarding	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The boarding provision is good because

- The overall effectiveness of the boarding provision at Shaftesbury School is good. Boarders make extensive progress in their educational, personal and social development. Parents and boarders have high levels of satisfaction with this boarding school.
- The boarding provision is well managed and organised. Boarding staff receive good support and training to deliver good quality care to boarders. The leadership of boarding has made significant improvements since the last inspection.
- There are strong relationships between staff and boarders. Consultation is effective as boarders views are valued and acted upon. Boarders have a sense of belonging to the boarding house. They benefit from the integration and friendships of pupils from many different nationalities to enrich their boarding experience.
- The provision for safeguarding boarders is good. Staff have received additional training on safe working practices and the school has effective links with other agencies to protect boarders welfare.
- All the national minimum standards are met.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools

Information about this inspection

This inspection was announced at 09:00 on 04 June 2014 and commenced four hours later. Inspection activities included discussions with boarders, the head of boarding, the head teacher, house parents, tutors, support staff and a trustee. Key boarding documents and policies were reviewed. An evening meal was sampled and a tour undertaken of the three areas of boarding accommodation. Survey responses from boarders and staff were evaluated along with information from Parent View.

Inspection team

Clare Davies

Lead social care inspector

Jennifer Reed

Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Shaftesbury School is a co-educational academy catering for approximately 1000 students aged 11 - 18 years. At the time of the inspection the school had 107 boarders, the majority being international students. The boarders are accommodated at Barton Hill House which is situated a short walk from the main school site.

The school is located in Shaftesbury, Dorset. The last inspection of the boarding provision took place in June 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure that health care policies reflect that some boarders may self-medicate. In particular specify the procedures for those boarders over 18 years.
- ensure that all bathrooms are suitably provided with soap and plugs to promote hand washing.
- introduce formal monitoring by the senior leadership team of any safeguarding concerns in boarding.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for boarders

Outstanding

Outcomes for boarders are outstanding. The boarding house is likened to 'a family', with a friendly environment where boarders feel safe. The location, a short distance away from the main school, contributes to the notion of going 'home' from school at the end of the day. One boarder reported, 'boarders and staff are all very friendly and make it feel like a home not just a house'. This view is supported by many boarders who strongly recommend this boarding school.

The boarding community is made up from a mixed gender, a wide age group and diverse cultural backgrounds. The integration of boarders is a strength within boarding and the wider school. Friendships and a strong affiliation to the boarding house promotes difference and a tolerance of others. Boarders recognise the enrichment of their boarding experience as they develop friendships across year groups and across cultures. 'I never thought I would be friends with a sixth former', declared a younger boarder.

Boarders make excellent progress in their personal development as they embrace the many opportunities available to them. The encouragement to pursue interests in sport, music and studies leads to great achievement as many boarders represent sports teams, perform in musical events and gain academic success. Many school head boys and head girls have been selected from the boarding house as they embrace the leadership opportunities. Informally, older boarders look out for younger ones and help them with their studies and participation in activities.

The boarder's council promotes the student voice. Year group representatives meet to raise suggestions and air concerns about boarding life. These issues are taken by the senior boarders to the meetings held by the governors. The success of these discussions have led to improved food and drink supplied at lunchtime and to improved recreation facilities. Boarders feel that their views are valued and they can effect change. They are excited to be involved in the planning of events such as the leavers dinner. Leavers benefit from additional support with their application to universities, demonstrating skills in organisation and leadership.

Boarders make good use of the sports facilities to keep fit and active. The induction includes a presentation by a nutritionist on healthy eating, image and weight control. This ensures that boarders make informed choices in taking responsibility for their health. Boarders who need specific support receive excellent care and advice from the staff who seek professional input to promote their general well-being.

Sixth form boarders benefit from increased levels of independence. The purpose built accommodation supports this well with a kitchen and with laundry facilities. These arrangements prepare boarders for the next stage of their life. For the majority this is university.

Quality of boarding provision and care

Good

The quality of the boarding provision is good. Boarders receive good pastoral care from a range of staff who hold boarder's welfare at the centre of their practice. The induction programme not only supports boarders with their transition into boarding life, it is also well designed to involve parents in this process. This is particularly important for the international boarders who are often in England for the first time. Upon arrival, boarding offers a range of social events to develop friendships and an introduction to the many clubs and societies available for membership. Boarders receive a range of presentations to provide advice and guidance on matters such as personal safety, e-safety and healthy eating. The thorough induction process supports boarders with adapting to living away from home.

Strong links between pastoral and teaching staff ensure a collaborative approach to support boarders with their personal and academic development. The head of boarding works closely with academic heads of departments, particularly regarding the sixth form, the largest number of boarders. Some teaching staff work alongside house parents after school. This provides boarders with a strong combination of pastoral and academic support to support their learning. Boarders receive focused tuition with subjects and there is support for those for whom English is an additional language.

The range of activities and engagement in the local community is a strength of this boarding provision. Boarders have a varied programme of activities available with good use of the grounds and school resources such as the gym, and sports facilities. The integration in the community is excellent with boarders being active members of youth groups, sports teams, musical groups and local churches. Membership of these groups enrich the cultural experience of boarding at this school, particularly for international students. In turn this engagement has strengthened the relationship between the school and the local community. The boarders are good ambassadors for the school.

Boarders report that they can talk with staff if they have any worries or concerns. Consultation occurs through surveys, weekly house meetings and the boarder's council. Helplines and an independent listener ensure that boarders can contact someone outside of the school if they prefer. Internet access and use of mobile telephones enable boarders to keep in contact with their family and friends.

Boarders receive advice and guidance on healthy lifestyles and there are good arrangements for registration with a doctor. Matters of sexual health and relationships are addressed through the school along with the dangers of alcohol, smoking cigarettes and illegal substances. Boarding staff reinforce these messages, supporting boarders to make safe choices. Medication is stored securely and administered by staff. The policy allows for boarders to self-medicate, subject to risk assessment. The policy does not acknowledge a difference in practice for those boarders over the age of 18 years. Individual health care needs are collated into care plans. This ensures that the appropriate level of support is provided.

The catering arrangements are of good quality. Breakfast and evening meals are cooked and served at the boarding house. The dining room provides a pleasant social space where boarders can meet for drinks and fruit before and after the evening meal. There is a good variety of home cooked meals to accommodate the range of preferences of the boarders, including themed menus from around the world.

The boarding accommodation is a combination of a purpose built modern house for sixth form students and linked older buildings. Boarders generally like their rooms and personalise them to their taste with posters and belongings. The accommodation for girls is scheduled for refurbishment this summer as part of the development plan. This will enhance the girl's rooms that look tired with some furniture in need of replacement. There have been some incidents of belongings going missing and this has upset some boarders. Each wardrobe has a fitted safe and boarders are reminded to use this for safe keeping of their valuables.

Bathroom provision is generally suitable. Some areas lack soap and plugs, these shortfalls do not promote hand washing and personal hygiene.

Boarders' safety

Good

Safety within boarding is good. The school follows safer recruitment procedures, carrying out checks on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children and young people. The school has embraced the recently implemented government guidance and ensured that all staff

have been briefed on this new document. This practice underpins the regular training staff receive on child protection and safeguarding matters. The school has been proactive in identifying additional child protection training for boarding staff recognising the importance of safe working practices. This effective training highlights the role each member of staff plays in the protection of boarders. For example domestic, maintenance and catering staff report how important their observations are when contributing to the safety and welfare of boarders.

The head of boarding reports welfare concerns to the designated lead person at the main school. There has been some effective collaborative working with other agencies when concerns have been identified and the local authority report that these arrangements work well. The headteacher checks some records held within the boarding house, however, there is no formal monitoring of records by the designated lead person. Without this level of scrutiny some records lack detail of the actions taken and their outcomes.

The strength of relationships between boarders and staff are significant in creating a safe environment. Boarders report how they enjoy the relaxed atmosphere. There are 'expectations of behaviour', a less punitive approach than referring to 'rules'. Consequently, boarders generally respect the staff expectations of them and consider them to be reasonable to assist with group living. At times when boarders push the boundaries and do not follow the expectations there are sanctions such as missing free time in the community, informing parents and, occasionally, a period of exclusion.

The boarder's handbook conveys messages that bullying will not be tolerated. This message is reinforced by staff in the main school and in boarding. Boarders are supported to resolve friendship disputes and generally they report that staff 'sort things out'. Records confirm that the boarding staff are consistent in responding to behaviour management. Boarders report that such matters are dealt with fairly. During the inspection boarders were observed to be polite and well behaved, engaging with the inspection process and were welcoming of visitors.

The school has a good relationship with the local police who visit to talk about the dangers of drug and alcohol use, personal safety and care of possessions. This presence offers advice and guidance to boarders and gives a clear message about the law in relation to these matters.

Matters of health and safety are routinely checked and repairs are promptly attended to. Fire safety is promoted by trained staff and evacuation procedures known by boarders. As a result the boarders benefit from a safe environment and this has a positive impact on their welfare. Risk assessments relating to the boarding house and to trips and activities identify likely risks and how they can be reduced or eliminated. This procedure is effective without denying boarders the opportunity to take measured risks as part of their growth and development. Since the head of boarding has completed training as an educational visits co-ordinator, the level of detail for risk assessments has increased. This has led to an improved evaluation of any trips and activities.

Leadership and management of boarding

Good

The leadership and management of the boarding provision is good. The head of boarding has made a significant impact on the development of boarding since the last inspection. The headteacher ensures that boarding has a strong profile within the whole school. This is supported by the head of boarding being a member of the senior leadership team. In addition, representatives of boarders attend governor's meetings. This ensures the student voice can be heard directly by those with governance. Boarders know that their views and opinions are valued.

Boarding staff are enthusiastic about their work and have welcomed the leadership from the head of boarding. They report that he has made a big difference with improving communication amongst the team, an increase in the inter-face between academic staff and the boarding house,

and by making himself available to boarders and staff. Staff are very positive about the boarding house and for the experience it provides to boarders. Many report they are proud to be part of this community.

The school welcomes feedback and consults with parents and boarders through surveys and correspondence. This consultation contributes to the development plans for boarding. Parents are complimentary about this boarding school for their children as reported through Parent View and the many positive letters and cards held by the staff. Parents praise the boarding staff for supporting their child's development by increasing their confidence, life skills, academic success and for the overall boarding experience.

All recommendations from the last inspection have been met. Many of these relate to areas of management. This includes staff supervision and training, dealing with complaints and developing a clearer focus on the aims and purpose of boarding. The head of boarding is keen to further improve the boarding provision and keeps up to date with best practice through his own professional development and through networking with national organisations. A regular review and evaluation of boarding ensures that changes are effectively implemented. For example, the identification of some health issues for boarders highlighted that the admission forms lacked detail. These have now been amended and improved. Collaborative working with the head of sixth form has improved attendance and ,subsequently, improved attainment for this large group of boarders.

The boarding staff are responsive to individual needs with a strong focus on pastoral care. They have undertaken additional training on counselling, bereavement and emotional well-being. This increases the depth and knowledge of some individual staff and contributes to the collective skills of the team.

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

Unique reference number	140898
Social care unique reference number	SC042320
DfE registration number	835/4511

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.

Type of school	Academy
Number of boarders on roll	107
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 18
Headteacher	Mr Mark Blackman
Date of previous boarding inspection	09/06/2011
Telephone number	01747 854498
Email address	office@shaftesburyschool.co.uk

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