

# Ripon Grammar School

Ripon Grammar School, 16 Clothholme Road, RIPON, North Yorkshire, HG4 2DG

<b>Inspection dates</b>	10/07/2014	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Outcomes for boarders	Outstanding	1
Quality of boarding provision and care	Good	2
Boarders' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of boarding	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### The boarding provision is good because

- The leadership and management of boarding is excellent. The head of care and heads of houses closely monitor the care provided against the boarding schools national minimum standards and make changes to practice where necessary. This provides a high capacity for continuous improvement.
- Boarding is providing significant benefits to the boys and girls who reside at the school. They become more independent, they develop social skills and confidence and they gain academically.
- Boarders thoroughly enjoy their residential experience. They like having friends around them and the range of activities available in their leisure time. The tutoring system and group meetings are help them to have an effective say in how care may be improved.
- The junior boys' washroom is in a poor condition. The senior management team have already identified this issue as a concern and have plans for a refurbishment in the near future.

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

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools

## Information about this inspection

Ofsted gave the school three hours' notice of the inspection of its residential provision. Inspection evidence came from one-to-one and group discussions with boarders; analysis of written surveys received from 48 boarders, 8 parents and 9 residential staff; discussions with residential staff, the headteacher and the head of care; assessment of the school's policies and records; a tour of the residential unit and observations of boarding routines.

## Inspection team

Steve Pearson	Lead social care inspector
Nicholas Murphy	Social care inspector

# **Full report**

## **Information about this school**

Ripon Grammar School is a maintained boarding school for 859 boys and girls aged 11 -18 years. The residential accommodation is provided in two houses which are located on site. School House provides boarding for up to 41 boys and Johnson House provides boarding for up to 34 girls. The school is located on the outskirts of Ripon and the boarding provision was last inspected on 7 February 2012. 67 students reside at the school on a weekly or termly basis.

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

- Take the necessary actions to meet the identified need to refurbish the junior boys' washroom.
- Update the school's child protection policy and behaviour management policy in accordance with guidance published by the Department for Education in 2014.
- Make clear when recording an issue of dissatisfaction whether it is a concern or a complaint. For a complaint, record the details found in the investigation and make clear when describing the outcome whether the complaint is upheld or not.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for boarders

### Outstanding

Outcomes for boarders are outstanding. Boarders thoroughly enjoy living at the school and all were keen to express the difference that boarding made to their lives. They have a deep appreciation of the opportunities that boarding gives them, for example, the ready access to superb sporting and cultural facilities. Many have developed new skills and aptitudes or built on existing ones. Additionally, boarders are keen to take part in activities outside the school. They have free time to go into the nearby town, as well as participating in more structured outings, for example, to local theatres.

Boarders enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff and with each other. For much of the time they require very little direct supervision and motivate themselves to carry out their daily routines. Boarders are tolerant of each other and show great consideration for their needs. They respect and celebrate the diversity within the boarding group, enjoying the opportunity to learn about different languages and cultures. They also identify strongly with the school in general and the boarding community in particular. This is demonstrated in recorded comments made by boarders who have left the school, such as: '...leaving here was like leaving your family...my time here has had a massive impact on me... you've literally changed my life for the better...' Boarders' sense of pride is reflected in their clear desire to 'put something back' into the community, for example, by undertaking the role of prefect.

During their time at the school, boarders become markedly more confident and self-reliant. A parent commented, 'My child is much more independent. They have learned how to get on with others and how to work in a team. These are fantastically valuable life lessons which the boarding experience has given them.' Boarders develop self-discipline and a clear vision of what they want to achieve in their school career. For example, they undertake set studies within boarding time largely without the need for staff oversight. One boarder said, 'I definitely prefer boarding to being at home – I don't have to worry about homework.' The benefit of this is reflected in the significantly better examination results achieved by boarders in comparison to day students.

Boarders are in exceptionally good health, and have an extremely good awareness of what makes for a healthy lifestyle. As a result they are able to make sensible choices, for example, in following a balanced and nutritious diet.

### Quality of boarding provision and care

### Good

The quality of care is good. Boarders receive an informative induction to boarding and are supported by prefects who help each boarder to settle in.

Some of the teaching staff also work in the boarding houses and this helps to consolidate boarders' academic progress.

The school has suitable arrangements for promoting good health. Weekly boarders who are ill usually go home and termly boarders remain in bed in the boarding house or in a separate sick bay room. Boarders have regular access to local medical and dental facilities.

In general the premises are suitably maintained and in a reasonable state of décor. Several junior boys expressed concern about their washroom saying, 'The washroom isn't nice as the toilet locks don't work, there's mould on the ceiling and the pipes under the sinks leak.' Inspection of the washroom confirmed that it is in a poor condition. However the shortfalls have already been identified by the leadership and management of the school and cost estimates are being

undertaken for a refurbishment in the near future.

Boarders are generally positive about the quality of the food. They have an influence over what is on the menu as they can attend a catering committee and make their opinions known. Boarders can also make a snack outside of mealtimes and have access to drinking water at all times.

Boarders can take part in a wide range of activities within the school. One boarder summed up the quality of activities saying, 'We have a wide range of activities that we'd not be able to take part in so easily at home. We have a swimming pool, five a side football and tennis courts and a climbing wall.' Boarders also take part in a range of activities outside of the school such as attendance at the city's army cadets, playing for the local rugby club and attendance on the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

### **Boarders' safety**

**Good**

The arrangements to ensure boarders are safe are good.

Boarders said, 'We feel safe' and, 'There isn't any bullying.' Boarders said that they generally got on well together and this was noticeable by observation at the inspection. Where allegations of bullying have been made these have been investigated appropriately.

The premises are safe. The school employs a manager to oversee the maintenance of the school site and buildings and to ensure these are safe. Professional technicians regularly service the electrical equipment, gas appliances and equipment for preventing, detecting and extinguishing fires. Boarders take part in fire drills at appropriate intervals and the boarding staff give them guidance on fire safety.

The school's child protection practices and procedures are effective. A child protection issue occurred at the school since the previous inspection. The statutory authorities, who fully investigated this, found no shortfalls in practices at the school. The school has developed procedures since then to make further improvements in promoting and ensuring safety.

The school is effective in promoting positive behaviour. The staff rarely need to issue consequences for poor behaviour. One boarder said, 'The staff treat us fairly' and most boarders agreed with this in the surveys they completed before the inspection.

Appropriate recruitment arrangements are in place which help to ensure that staff employed to work with boarders are suitable.

The school uses an effective assessment procedure to identify hazards and reduce any foreseeable risks to students.

### **Leadership and management of boarding**

**Outstanding**

The leadership and management of boarding are outstanding. At the previous inspection Ofsted judged that the overall effectiveness of the boarding provision was good. Ofsted suggested a point for improvement concerning increased consistency of practice between the two boarding houses. The shortfall has now been addressed because the boarders and staff from both houses interact regularly and meet to discuss issues which creates greater consistency.

The school has a clear sense of purpose for the boarding provision. The aims of boarding are to increase boarders' independence, promote social development and confidence and to aid academic progress. These aims are met to a high extent.

The boarding staff are led well and the management of boarding is proactive and responsive. Staffing levels are appropriate to meet boarders' needs and staff rotas provide for a high degree of consistency. This helps boarders feel settled and secure.

Boarding staff receive training in a wide range of subjects specific to their caring role. They receive good support from the heads of house and from the head of care. The headteacher has sourced extra funding to facilitate specialist training in relation to residential care. For example, as a result of extra resources all boarding staff have recently received training in promoting good emotional health for young people. The staff spoken with at the inspection said that they felt well-supported and received suitable training for their care role.

The school has a high capacity for continuous improvement. The head of care and heads of houses monitor the quality of care on a frequent basis to identify any shortfalls or concerns. They are quick to make amendments to practice when necessary. They carefully and accurately monitor the quality of care against the boarding schools national minimum standards and make changes where necessary to address any deficiencies.

All the policies and procedures as required by the national minimum standards for boarding schools are in place. Two important policies, about child protection and behaviour management, have not been updated in line with guidance published by the Government in 2014. This has minimal impact on boarders' welfare and the school has already identified the need to update their procedures accordingly.

The school is proactive in maintaining contact with parents on a regular basis. This helps parents to feel reassured about their child's welfare.

## 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>	121694
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC007938
<b>DfE registration number</b>	815/4215

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>	
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Martin Pearman
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	07/02/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01765 602647
<b>Email address</b>	admin@ripongrammar.co.uk



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