

Beechen Cliff School

Alexandra Park, Bath, Somerset, BA2 4RE

Inspection dates	27/01/2015 to 28/01/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for boarders	Good	2
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 is good. The school provides a valuable boarding experience on the lives of boarding pupils. Boarders make good progress, grow in confidence, independence skills and are given a range of opportunities and encouragement to realise their potential.
- Boarders live in a highly inclusive boarding community, forming positive and good relationships. They encourage and support one another, have fun while learning and feel safe. They are respectful and tolerant of each other and develop a strong sense of their own value and self-worth.
- Awareness of individuality and the needs and rights of others are actively promoted throughout the boarding community. Positive behaviour, inclusion and consultation ensures boarders develop a rich understanding of equality and diversity. This enhances boarders understanding and respect for others.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and are well known and understood by staff and pupils. The senior management team and designated staff understand their responsibilities within the wider safeguarding framework, which ensures boarders feel and are kept safe.
- The leadership and management of boarding is good. Boarding forms an important part of the whole school structure and fully compliments the educational component of the school. The boarding house staff, supported by the schools senior staff team, provide strong leadership. Staff have high aspirations for the young people and have created within the boarding provision a structured and supportive environment, which encourages boarders to take responsibility of themselves and others. During the course of the inspection all national minimum standards were found to be met.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools

Information about this inspection

Notice of the inspection was given by the lead inspector in the appropriate timescales. During the course of the inspection, the inspector met with boarders, staff and the senior management team. Evidence was gathered from discussions, observations, and the collection of data from material provided.

Inspection team

Linda Bond

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Beechen Cliff School is an Academy of 1230 pupils. It provides for boys only from 11-16 and a mixed gender sixth form of 350. The school has a small boarding facility, housing up to 32 pupils. In its first year of operation (2014 opening) it has 11 pupils boarding. The school is located close to the centre of Bath and caters for pupils of all abilities.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for boarders

Good

Boarders say they 'love their life at school'. They present as relaxed, respectful and happy when interacting with their fellow boarders and staff. They enjoy a good choice of individual and team activities, and their weekends are appropriately busy and fun. Boarders speak of how they have been encouraged to develop independence skills, resulting in them being trusted to be safe and well behaved when away from the school. Staff give up a good deal of time to ensure that all activities whether in the school or in the local community have, when necessary suitable adult supervision. These activities are tailored to meet the needs, skills and interests of all the boarders. As a result, boarders have grown in confidence and self-esteem.

Furthermore, it is a real strength of the school that so many staff have a pastoral concern for the boarders, both formal and informal. The boarders themselves commented favourably of their positive relationships with staff, and the availability of different staff to help them if they have problems. There are enough staff dedicated to boarding who deal with issues very successfully. In particular, boarders who come from overseas settle and integrate well. In addition, there are staff skilled in translation, resulting in a successful transition of these boarders into the school.

Boarders' health outcomes are good. A strong emphasis is placed on ensuring they eat a healthy, balanced diet. During the course of the inspection, meal times were observed and it was evident that boarders and staff use these times as a social event. They engage in healthy discussion and plan activities. Boarders can also prepare late suppers in their boarding area. This facility enables them to learn how to prepare and cook meals and take responsibility for cleaning. Boarders report how this has enriched their boarding experience and taught them to become considerate to others.

Inclusion and consultation with boarders remains central to the ethos of the school, and there are a number of different ways by which boarders' views are sought. For example house meetings and discussion groups. As a result boarders feel included, consulted with and able to influence the on-going development of the boarding provision.

Quality of boarding provision and care

Good

The quality of the boarding provision is good. Boarders either share or have their own ensuite bedrooms. These are well designed, comfortable and warm. Considerable effort has been made by the staff, alongside boarders to ensure that each bedroom meets the boarders own needs. In doing so boarders have bedrooms that are individualised and safe, where their privacy and dignity is very well maintained. Further to this, each bedroom and common/study areas provide boarders with safe access to the Internet. Thereby enabling boarders with a range of private places to study, socialise and communicate with their families. The common areas are homely and warm, providing space for boarders to relax, eat and invite friends to.

Induction procedures for boarders are in place. Thereby ensuring boarders have varied opportunities to learn about the boarding processes and procedures. Individualised and well documented care plans, identify the health, emotional and physical needs of boarders. These documents ensure all staff are aware of the differing needs of boarders, in particular those moving from other countries. Boarders benefit from pastoral support. Their individual needs are understood by staff and this contributes to boarders academic and personal growth.

There are many good facilities both within and outside of the school for boarders. Keeping healthy and safe are themes woven into all activities. In particular, a strong emphasis is placed on boarders enjoying team and individual sports. As a result, boarders enjoy keeping physically

healthy, achieve success and develop positive relationships with their peers.

Boarders benefit from a range of wholesome and nutritionally well balanced meals provided by a qualified chef. In addition the boarders can access a well equipped kitchen and food store that enables them to plan, prepare and cook meals and snacks of their choice.

Boarders' safety

Good

The safety of the boarding provision is good. Boarders say they feel 'very safe' and say this is due to many factors. For example, knowing there are staff they can talk to, and knowing the building is safe.

Boarders live in an environment that provides good physical safety. Both by having their own accommodation, secured by their own personal fob entry key, and systems being in place to protect boarders from safety hazards. This is demonstrated through the routine use of, and referencing to, policies and procedures which are reviewed as circumstances change. All domestic installations are regularly checked and serviced. Good assessment systems are in place for on-site and off-site activities and organised holiday excursions. In addition, boarders know and understand how to use the recreational areas safely both indoors and outdoors.

The boarding provision has an extensive range of policies that are reviewed routinely by qualified designated staff. These include safe recruitment, bullying and safeguarding. Staff report in addition they are provided with a range of training opportunities such as first aid, safeguarding, child sexual exploitation and positive behaviour management. Thus ensuring their practice remains safe, current and is underpinned by knowledge and research.

At the point of this inspection there were no reported safeguarding concerns, incidents of physical intervention, and no reports of any boarders going missing. A confidence and understanding was shared by the staff team and from the boarders of procedures to follow in light of any concerns.

Leadership and management of boarding

Good

The leadership and management of the boarding provision is good. Boarding is well organised and the senior management team are ably led by the head of the school. Leadership and management is effective because of the strong commitment of staff who understand the aims and ethos of boarding, and their roles and areas of responsibility. The head of school and the head of boarding have a hands-on management approach and both have a very visible presence in the boarding school. Staff commend the depth of knowledge and compassion the head of boarding possesses, and states the head of school is 'outstanding' in his abilities and skills as a head.

Through the course of the inspection observation of and discussion with the senior management team validates these comments and further strengthens this evidence.

Boarders benefit from a senior management team and staff group that is stable and consistent. However, when recruitment is necessary, safe recruitment procedures are followed rigorously. All necessary documents are in place, including a good induction and on-going training and supervision programme to ensure boarders remain safe. Risk assessments and school record keeping contributes effectively to boarders' welfare. Staff take responsibility to ensure that records kept are being monitored and evaluated by the senior management team. In doing so corrective action is taken to address any trends or patterns and this ensures that the boarders' welfare remains a key priority for the school.

A statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is available to parents, boarders and staff. In addition, the school provides a range of helpful material to parents and new boarders including a handbook and website. These documents continue to be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the boarding provision.

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	136520
Social care unique reference number	SC475345
DfE registration number	800/5400

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	
Number of boarders on roll	
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Mr A Davies
Date of previous boarding inspection	
Telephone number	01225480466

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