

# Skegness Grammar School

SKEGNESS GRAMMAR SCHOOL, VERNON ROAD, SKEGNESS, LINCOLNSHIRE, PE25 2QS

<b>Inspection dates</b>	2 June 2015 to 4 June 2015
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<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	<b>Good</b>
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Quality of care and support	Good
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How well children and young people are protected	Good
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Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
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## Summary of key findings

### The boarding provision is good because

- The caring and nurturing staff have high aspirations for all young people.
- The boarding house provides unique opportunities for young people from various cultures to experience a wide range of enriching experiences.
- The good induction young people receive ensures they are prepared for life at the boarding house.
- The leadership is inspirational, motivated, and committed to securing further improvement.

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

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review the cultural make-up of the independent listeners in order to reflect the diverse young people who board.

- Ensure the preferred food choices of young people are considered.
- Record where supervision and support is given to staff
- Review the training opportunities on offer for staff
- Record the views of young people when issuing sanctions

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was announced on the morning of the start of the inspection. The inspectors visited the residential accommodation, spoke to young people and staff, including key staff with responsibility for the residential provision. The inspectors also observed practice in the residential provision and scrutinised school policies and records. The inspectors also gathered information from Parent View.

## Inspection team

Judith Longden

Lead social care inspector

Catherine Honey

Social care inspector

# **Full report**

## **Information about this school**

Skegness Grammar School is a co-educational, selective, foundation day and boarding school based in the town of Skegness. The school caters for boys and girls aged 11 - 18 years and there are currently 564 pupils on roll. 50 pupils are boarders. The boarding community caters for boarders from different cultures and ethnicities. The boarding house is located on the edge of the market town of Wainfleet. The boarding provision was last inspected in May 2012.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Good**

Young people have very enjoyable experiences in school and in the boarding provision and make good progress in education and personal and social development. There is a good mix of young people; the boarding house provides unique opportunities for young people from various cultures to have a wide range of enriching experiences to enable them to make progress academically and improve their language skills. Some young people benefit from scholarships to the school and boarding house and this supports them to achieve to their potential. Consequently, they benefit from living in a multi-cultural environment where they learn about different cultures, develop skills in social interaction, and achieve academically.

The boarding house is a homely, family environment with good structure, routines, and clear boundaries. Staff recognise that this has a positive impact on the progress of young people. One member of staff said, 'because we are like a small family home we know about them, know their personal things and their quirks and this helps them to grow in confidence.'

Staff have high aspirations for all young people and this is mirrored in the ambitions and plans young people have for themselves. The use of 'prep time' in the boarding house enables them to complete homework and revise for their examinations. There are strong links between the school, Governing Body, parents, other agencies, and the boarding house, which ensures continuity in the care and education of young people and enhances their boarding experience.

Staff, leaders, and managers clearly understand the individual needs and identities of young people and identify how to ensure they receive the best individual care. Relationships with staff are very positive and this includes the cleaning, catering, and administrative staff. A real strength of the provision is that young people feel so relaxed and at ease with all the adults who are involved in their lives. Staff ensure relationships between young people are managed effectively, encouraging strong and appropriate friendships. This enables swift management of any concerns or issues between young people. The use of senior boarders to support, mentor, guide, and encourage others further enhances this.

The head of boarding and his team have identified where there are weaknesses and shortfalls and have made significant improvements to the provision since the last inspection. Progress continues, and it is clear that leaders and staff are passionate about moving towards providing outstanding care, at the same time sustaining the progress they have already made.

Staff work well as a team and communicate effectively to ensure consistency in care. Young people are very active in how the provision is run; they take part in various committees on subjects such as food, boarding, activities, and an eco-project. Young people run these committees and pass any issues, concerns, or ideas to the staff meeting for discussion. This ensures their views are heard and staff value their opinions. One

young person said 'it is an opportunity to make change and influence.' Complaints and concerns are dealt with swiftly and the provision of boxes in the hall where young people can 'post' concerns means there is a system for handling any confidential issues.

There is a range of activities provided on site and in the local community and further afield. Activities reflect the young people's hobbies, cultural interests, and provide additional learning opportunities to complement their education. Sporting activities are encouraged which promotes their health.

The medical needs of the young people are met because of good partnership working. Although the boarding provision does not currently have a qualified nurse, there is a good contact arrangement with the school nurse, who provides a drop in service, and medical professionals, including the local General Practitioner practice nurses. This ensures there is no negative impact on the care and wellbeing of young people because of this vacancy. A senior member of boarding staff ensures medication is provided as required and several staff are trained in medication and first aid. This means the medication practice and health care is safe.

Young people learn some basic skills for independence such as cooking, laundry, and health management. The recent introduction of a new basic skills programme will further enhance this learning.

The use of varied technology ensures young people maintain contact with their families. Staff are aware of the varied time zones in which families reside which ensures contact is made at appropriate times. Staff ensure that parents are kept informed of any issues, concerns and the progress of their child.

### **Quality of care and support**

**Good**

The links with parents and potential boarders prior to admission is excellent. The boarding house administrator provides a very stable, highly skilled and reassuring presence for parents and young people to ensure they have all the information and support prior to joining and on coming to the boarding school. Young people who are leaving the boarding provision are given the support they need to ensure they are aware of all possible avenues for their future.

The induction into the boarding house for new young people is excellent and ensures they are made to feel welcome and are well prepared for life as a boarder. They are provided with information that ensures they have a clear understanding of procedures and safety, and take part in activities to encourage teamwork and socialisation. The use of mentors within their own peer group further enhances this induction.

Young people are well cared for and their individual needs are identified in clearly written care plans that are regularly reviewed to ensure needs are met, any new concerns are highlighted and progress is recorded.

Young people's self- esteem, confidence and sense of identity is promoted by a staff team who understand the individual and who work hard to provide the care required to

meet their needs. They are also able to identify external sources to enhance the care. For example, young people are supported to attend local places of worship relevant to their culture. Young people from all countries are encouraged to celebrate their culture with others to promote understanding and celebrate diversity. Independent listeners from the local community are accessible for young people to share any concern and this provides them with support from outside of the home environment. The head of boarding is aware that this would be a better resource if consideration were given to provide listeners who reflect the cultural diversity of the young people.

The boarding provision is very homely and at the same time provides the security that enables young people to feel safe. Regular maintenance ensures the home remains in a good state of repair.

Young people are very active in the community and there are strong links with voluntary community groups, such as the Rotary Club. This enables them to experience a range of activities and enhance their confidence as well as feeling a part of the community in which they live. Transport to and from the local area and further afield is provided by staff. Older students are able to utilise public transport to access facilities further afield.

Staff, including the boarding house senior cook, clearly recognise and understand each individual young person's specialist dietary needs. They are also clear about the likes and dislikes of young people. However, since a large company has taken over the catering operation, although they have retained the services of the boarding house senior cook, there have been several issues with the food provided. A number of these issues have been resolved through the young people's committees but currently they do not always get their preferred choices at meal times. This is because the catering company provides equal quantities of two main choices of meal rather than tailoring the quantities to reflect the likes and dislikes of the young people. A member of staff commented that the catering company 'need to understand this is their home not a school with mass catering.' The head of boarding is aware of this issue and is trying to secure representation from the catering company on the food committee to try to resolve this.

### **How well children and young people are protected      Good**

Staff understand how to keep young people safe and follow the appropriate policies and procedures as required. They understand the differing vulnerabilities of young people and ensure thorough assessments identify how to manage potential risks. Having a designated safeguarding lead in both the school and boarding house ensures there is good communication, which provides consistency in keeping young people safe. The head of boarding and the governor responsible for safeguarding monitor safety matters robustly. Young people know whom they can talk to; staff, independent listeners, governors, and they know how to contact Ofsted and organisations such as Childline for support. Sixth form students have been trained in identifying safeguarding concerns as it was acknowledged that a number of younger students were seeking support from older students.

Staff understand how to effectively manage behaviour and how best to diffuse any potential conflict or incident. Staff promote positive behaviour, and young people and

staff are clear on the expectations on how young people should behave and the consequences that will be imposed for any negative behaviour. Sanctions are recorded but this could be further improved, as currently young people are not routinely asked for their views, which means it is not evident that the sanction is always effective.

Young people do not participate in risk taking behaviours such as drug taking and criminality. Any issues relating to self-harming have been handled effectively, with the identification of appropriate support agencies such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service being sought to ensure the most appropriate care is received. Although there are no incidents of young people being missing from home the staff understand how to protect them in the event of a missing or absence episode.

Young people understand the need for respect for others and report that bullying is not a concern. Where there have been incidents in the past, these have been handled appropriately and young people feel safe as a result. Staff are aware of the dangers of internet bullying and risks posed by the internet. Staff ensure young people are made aware of these dangers and are able to take age appropriate risks. This means they are not prevented from enjoying the safe use of modern technology. Detailed activity risk assessments ensure they enjoy a full range of challenging and new experiences whilst remaining safe.

The home is maintained to a very safe standard and maintenance and repairs that constitute a hazard are actioned swiftly. Regular fire drills ensure young people and staff are aware of safety procedures. There is a good relationship between the home and the fire service. They have provided educational talks for young people and carried out evacuation practices. This improves their knowledge and understanding of fire risks. Staff are safely recruited, visitors to the provision are checked for identity, signed in, and monitored appropriately. The local taxi company the young people use has drivers who have been police checked. This means young people are not at risk from inappropriate adults.

#### **Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

**Good**

A very experienced head of boarding and a committed and well-supported staff team lead the boarding provision. All staff and leaders are motivated to provide care and support that will enhance young people's experiences and provide opportunities that will enable them to meet the high aspirations they have. Staff often go above and beyond to ensure this happens, for example some staff work additional unsociable hours to enable young people to access activities at the weekend when public transport is not available. There are always sufficient staff in the provision to meet the needs of young people.

The head of boarding, head master, and governors are enthusiastic and driven to continue to improve the provision. There has been significant progress since the last inspection and all the shortfalls previously identified have been addressed. The head of boarding has made good use of his peers to monitor the progress and carried out mock inspections to ascertain the shortfalls and strengths of the provision. Vigorous scrutiny from the governors in addition to the routine monitoring by the head of boarding further enhances this. These monitoring activities inform an improvement programme that is

both robust and realistic.

The use of committees ensures the views of all young people are taken into consideration and it is clear the head of boarding and all the staff take these seriously. Any concerns are mostly acted upon swiftly and effectively. The issue regarding the catering company has been identified by young people, staff, and the head of boarding and this is in the process of being addressed.

Staff feel supported by leaders and managers. Both staff and young people report that this is the best leadership the home has had for a while. Regular house meetings ensure staff are aware of any issues, concerns, ideas and health and safety matters. Good communication and strong teamwork provides an environment where staff responses to young people are consistent and supportive. Staff receive regular performance reviews to monitor their practice and these are recorded. In addition, supervision is given to all staff, but not always formally recorded. This means there is not always a record of the good support they say they receive. The induction for new staff is good, and regular training ensures they are able to keep up to date with current practice. Some staff say more training would be good but acknowledge that this is not always available.



## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120696
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC060655
<b>DfE registration number</b>	

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>	Boarding
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	50
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	11-18
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Sprague
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	21 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01754 610000
<b>Email address</b>	michelle.dales@sgs.lincs.sch.uk

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