

Queen Elizabeth's

Western Road, Crediton, Devon, EX17 3LU

Inspection dates

3 – 5 November 2015

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good **2**

The quality of care and support

Requires improvement 3

How well children and young people are protected

Good 2

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings

The boarding provision is good because

- The young people enjoy living at the school and make strong friendships. This underpins their academic achievements and their social development.
- The staff team provide effective support for the young peoples' educational studies as well as their extra-curricular interests.
- A strong sense of community exists within the boarding provision. Young people look after each other and support those who require help.
- The cultural identity and background of the young people is valued and celebrated by staff.
- The young people are taught to take responsibility for their actions. They learn about health and social issues in a safe and supportive manner.
- The staff team is effectively led and suitably trained.
- The senior management team is approachable and promotes the boarding provision as an integral part of the school.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- 5.4 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.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.

Information about this inspection

- The Social Care Regulatory Inspector spoke with young people and their families and staff working across the boarding and education provisions.
- The Social Care Regulatory Inspector observed staff and young people together. He inspected the accommodation and facilities of all the young people.
- The Social Care Regulatory Inspector reviewed documents, including those relating to young peoples' care, views and behaviour management.
- The Social Care Regulatory Inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and the management's evaluation of the boarding provision.

Inspection team

Guy Mammatt

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

- The academy is a large secondary education school. Day pupils come from Crediton, where the school is situated and the surrounding area. Young people who board come from the UK and various other countries.
- The school converted to academy status in April 2011. While the academy is commonly known as Queen Elizabeth's Academy Trust, its legal title is the QE Academy. No other educational establishments are members of the Trust.
- The academy has a boarding provision for up to 57 young people. The boarding provision is divided over three houses on the main school site, which are in close proximity of each other.
- The young people who board are privately funded and none are looked after by a local authority.
- A new school Principal was appointed in September 2014. The Head of Boarding has been in post since 2002. The school employs a core staff team as well as individuals from overseas who are working on a gap year.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

The young people make good academic and personal progress. They enjoy positive social experiences and boarding enriches their life. Young people develop positive friendships and report that it is the best school that they have been to. They also comment that members of staff are very helpful and kind. Many international young people attend the school to develop their English language. Importantly, it is recognised by the management and staff that these young people have a great deal to offer in exchange.

The young people receive good support from staff with their educational studies. Regular organised time is arranged so they are able to complete their homework, which is also supported by teaching staff. Young people can also have extra support from staff in the evenings for their education, when it is identified that they require it.

The boarding staff team track the young peoples' progress. They communicate with teachers if something at the boarding provision or in the young person's personal life is impacting on their studies. Members of the boarding staff team join parent meetings and mentor days to advocate on behalf of the families who cannot attend. They also help the young people with their options in Year 9 and their applications for university.

The staff organise a weekly music club. The young people enjoy accessing the musical facilities and some have formed a band. A parent states that 'there is something about the ethos within the boarding provision that encourages and supports young people to have a go, try new things and clearly have a lot of fun in the doing.'

The safety of young people is given high priority. There are robust arrangements for safeguarding and young people are taught how to keep themselves safe. The school's approach is to help young people think about the risks they will encounter and with the staffs' guidance work out how these risks can be overcome. Young people are also taught to safeguard each other and to recognise the signs of someone who may be at risk of harm.

The young people build trusted and secure relationships with each other and with appropriate adults. They feel well supported, valued and respect one another. Strategies are in place to manage behaviour which are understood by all and effectively implemented.

The school's health care arrangements promote the young peoples' physical, emotional and psychological health. Medication is safely managed and administered.

The young people learn the skills they need to prepare them for adulthood and develop their maturity. They take part in a boarding life skills programme, which aims to develop them into becoming a successful adult. Among other things, the young people have completed assignments on staying safe using social media, tips for a healthy diet and an exercise regime. One young person delivered a presentation on gender equality and breaking down pre-conceived judgemental views by society on women.

The boarding provision works in partnership with other elements of the school, parents and carers to support the young people. There is effective and regular communication and positive feedback from parents and professionals regarding the boarding provision and the management of the school. A parent states that the 'staff listen to the emotional needs of their child as well as

support their education.'

The quality of care and support

Requires improvement

The quality of care and support for young people requires improvement because it fails to meet one National Minimum Standard in this section. The young people live in an environment that is in need of refurbishment and where bedroom space can sometimes be cramped.

The young people experience care which is sensitive and responsive to their age, identity and culture. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and are empowered to make choices for themselves. There is a strong community within the boarding provision. The young people make friends easily and are caring towards younger individuals. The staff team promotes the cultural needs of the young people effectively. Young people access places of worship in line with their religious beliefs. There is also a strong emphasis on what the local pupils and the wider community can learn from the young people who are from other cultures.

The young peoples' individual needs are understood and supported by enthusiastic staff that have time to listen them. There are also independent avenues of advice available, which are well known to the young people. For example, an independent advocate, a counsellor and a nurse.

The young people are encouraged to keep themselves fit and healthy. Many of them access the school sports centre in the evenings and some join sport clubs in the local community. The young people have a good selection of nourishing meals to support their growth and personal choice.

The views of the young people are sought through a boarders' council. Members of the council represent their peers and are responsible for acting on their views. For example, arranging a Christmas dinner party, selecting branded clothing for the boarding provision and organising a task day where all young people will contribute to enriching their physical environment.

The young people enjoy and benefit from a broad range of social and recreational activities. The communal areas are well planned to allow a range of simultaneous activities. Young people can watch television; play on games consoles and access board games and books. They can also use musical instruments and play ball games on the front lawn. The young people access the local area by themselves to explore and to go shopping. Staff also organise fun activities to help the young people make friends and learn about their local surroundings.

All members of staff at the school work closely to ensure that young people receive good quality care and support. The senior leadership team values the importance of the young peoples' boarding experience on their academic and social progress.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

The young people feel safe and are helped to keep themselves and each other safe. They are taught to understand and manage risk in personal, social, health, citizenship and economic lessons and through the support of the boarding staff. The young people learn about the risks and health implications of drinking alcohol, smoking and the misuse of drugs including legal highs. The young people are regularly reminded about e-safety and anti-bullying measures. They also receive advice on sexual health and how to keep themselves safe in a relationship.

The adults who work at the academy understand the risks posed by adults or other young people who use the internet to try to gain access to young people. There are well-developed and effective strategies to keep young people safe and to support them in learning how to keep themselves safe. Including, young people being integral to the e-safety focus group and e-safety policy of the school.

The young people benefit from a good balance of staff supervision and freedom. They are enabled to take age appropriate and reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. Clear risk assessments ensure that young people in a relationship are not allowed to enter each other's bedrooms.

The staff team are all clear on the procedures to take where they are concerned about the safety of a young person. There is a designated safeguarding lead whose role is effective in pursuing concerns and protecting the young people. They share emerging concerns with the designated person to collate information and identify patterns about young people who may be at risk of harm.

The designated safeguarding lead shares child protection concerns and allegations with the appropriate authorities. Investigations into allegations of abuse are handled sensitively and fairly. The school has strong and effective links with the local authority and there is satisfactory communication regarding safeguarding issues.

All staff that come in to contact with young people in the school are carefully selected and recruited. There is robust monitoring to prevent unsuitable people from being recruited and having the opportunity to work alongside young people. Each member of staff receives regular training and support to ensure they have the skills to protect and safeguard young people.

Staff respond appropriately on the rare occasion when young people go missing or whose whereabouts are unknown. This ensures that young people are quickly located and kept safe. Adults consistently promote good behaviour and frequently use rewards to acknowledge young people's positive choices and achievements. Consequences are used to deter young people in engaging in negative behaviour or breaking the school's rules. Usually this will take the form of losing family (house) points, being grounded or a community service. However, on occasions this has also resulted in fixed term exclusions. The leaders and managers monitor the use of punishment and restorative work to ensure that it is fair and effective.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement because it fails to meet one National Minimum Standard in this section. The record of complaints received and their outcomes is not robust. Records do not demonstrate that all complaints are managed in a satisfactory manner.

The ethos and objective of the boarding provision are effectively demonstrated in staff practice. As such, staff and young people create a friendly and caring atmosphere, based on trust and respect for all individuals. There is equal opportunity and respect for all the young people.

The leaders and managers have high expectations and aspirations for all of the young people. They ensure that young people make good academic and personal progress, are safe and achieve their goals.

The Head of Care uses the strengths and expertise of the staff effectively. She is approachable and provides the staff with good professional supervision. The staff all feel supported by the leadership team and feel that their work is valued. They work collaboratively across the school to address difficult issues and develop a consistent shared approach.

The boarding provision is suitably staffed to meet the needs of the young people. The staff team is stable and delivers good quality services to the young people. Young people and parents speak highly of the staff. Some young people have returned for an additional second year and some parents arrange for siblings to attend following on from the positive experience of their first child.

The leaders and managers at the school regularly monitor the quality of care in the boarding provision. They identify strengths and areas for improvement. They also contact previous residents to gain their feedback and assess how the boarding experience influenced their lives.

Since the last inspection changes have been made to the young people's handbook. This has resulted in an informative, colour booklet being given to all new young people and their families. Also, catering facilities at the school have been improved.

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

Unique reference number	136646
Social care unique reference number	SC022233
DfE registration number	136646

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 Trust Boarding School
Number of boarders on roll	47
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to18
Headteacher	Rupert Poole
Date of previous boarding inspection	26 - 28 June 2012
Telephone number	01363 773 401
Email address	admin@queenelizabeths.devon.sch.uk

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