

Old Swinford Hospital School

Old Swinford Hospital School, Heath Lane, STOURBRIDGE, West Midlands DY8 1QX

Inspection dates	17/01/2017 to 19/01/2017	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Good	2
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The boarding provision is good because

- Boarding pupils enjoy being in residence. They are cared for well by a staff team that is interested in pupils' development, with individualised packages of care to help those in need of additional support. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities, keeping busy throughout their time in boarding.
- Healthcare arrangements help to keep pupils well. Staff have increased their awareness of mental health issues and the good use of a school counselling service supports pupils in the development of their emotional well-being. Medication administration is generally good, with staff overseeing safe use of medicines. Arrangements for the monitoring of controlled medication are being developed to fully support pupils' safety.
- Boarding houses are generally well maintained, although there are areas requiring development. Excellent accommodation is in place for those experiencing boarding for the first time, and for those preparing to leave.
- Pupils are kept safe through well-known child protection procedures and good links with external safeguarding professionals. Complaints raised are responded to well. Good behaviour management systems encourage pupils to behave well and respect others.
- An experienced senior team effectively leads the school. Staff aspire to a consistent culture of high aspiration for pupils, including encouraging them to do well in all areas. Staff are well trained, although records of specialist courses completed are not always well kept.
- Staff work well with their seniors, who offer regular support. Formalised supervision is not consistently recorded, however.
- National minimum standards not met do not have a significant impact on the well-being of pupils, or affect their safety.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

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

- 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. (National Minimum Standards, 5.4)
- All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the boarders to whom they are prescribed. Boarders allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so. (National Minimum Standards, 3.4)
- Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding. (National Minimum Standards, 15.1)

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that welfare plans are consistent in their detail and understanding across the school site, including sufficient information to inform staff of pupils' needs.
- Consider improvements in lighting and security across the site to improve pupils' safety.
- Increase the detail of records relating to pupils' complaints, ensuring that they show full outcomes of concerns raised.
- Develop a more robust system for recording specialist training completed by staff.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection after one day's notice. Inspection activities included: observation of boarding practice over two evenings in all of the residential houses; formal group meetings with pupils, as well as informal discussion during shared meals; meetings and discussions with boarding staff; contact with the statutory safeguarding authority to gather their views; and scrutiny of a wide range of documentation about boarding. The inspection was completed at the same time as an inspection of education at the school. In November 2016, a pilot inspection was completed at the school to examine the new framework for inspection of boarding provisions, and some of the information gained during that inspection was used during this visit.

Inspection team

Andrew Hewston	lead social care inspector
Lisa Walsh	social care inspector
Louise Battersby	social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Old Swinford Hospital School offers 502 boarding places. At the time of this inspection, 327 pupils were resident. It is a voluntary aided boarding school for boys aged 11 years to 16 years, and for both boys and non-boarding girls in the sixth form. Year 13 boys reside in discrete accommodation that has been newly opened. Year 7 boys also live together in one boarding house. The school educates pupils from the local area, from further afield in the United Kingdom and from abroad. Some join the school at times other than Year 7. Although the background of most pupils is relatively advantaged, others are admitted and supported by charitable foundations, enabling them to attend the school. A very small proportion of the pupils are selected on ability or aptitude, and boarders are selected by suitability to board. Currently, there are 163 pupils who attend the school as day students in the Sixth Form.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Boarding pupils enjoy being in residence. This helps to enhance their progression through the school. Pupils make progress in their education and emotional well-being due to caring staff and consistent awareness of pupils' differing needs. Relationships between staff and pupils are good.. Pupils say that the boarding experience helps them learn how to live alongside their peers and, 'it's a great place to get used to when you go on to university.'

Pupils develop strong and positive relationships with their peer groups and the staff team. Pupils identify strongly with their 'house'. Whole school competitions allow them to work well together and feel part of the school community.

Staffing is appropriate, with sufficient adults available at all times for pupils to talk to and raise their views. Staff show a willingness to engage with pupils, listening to their views and debating current issues. This increases pupils' awareness of the world around them, as well as increasing their discussion skills. The boarding provision offers a comfortable environment, where staff show an interest in pupils' development and achievements.

Pupils are encouraged to do well, with prefect positions being sought after and respected. Prefects are proud of their role and take their responsibilities seriously, meeting regularly and completing tasks to support the smooth running of the boarding houses, including supervision of prep time.

The quality of care and support

Good

Boarding pupils are looked after well by a staff team that works effectively together. Staff have a detailed awareness of the differing needs of the pupils. This leads to examples of high quality individualised care throughout the boarding provision. Pupils are well supported by the residential team, often highlighting specific staff members who they felt well supported by. For example, one pupil commented, 'Matron is really good, she does things for us, she watches out for us if we are down.'

The staff team is sensitive and responsive to pupils' identities. This includes their ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation. Staff can discuss how recent training has led to a decrease in comments suggesting pupils 'man up', using alternative techniques to develop a positive self-view and build up emotional resilience.

Good induction procedures welcome new pupils. These include a tester weekend, and a boarding home dedicated to Year 7, with an emphasis on nurturing and caring for those that are finding boarding overwhelming. This induction process allows pupils to develop communal peer support, as well as increasing staff awareness of the pupils' abilities, ready for when they are moved into different houses in their following year. A newly opened Year 13 provision increases older pupils' ability to develop independence skills. Most increase their cooking skills and enjoy additional privileges relating to free time and

being off site.

The vast majority of the accommodation is of high quality. A new reporting process for repairs provides an improved system for swiftly responding to maintenance issues. Pupils are generally positive about their houses, being proud to show inspectors around, and enthusiastically discussing games rooms, computer areas, and their own rooms. Houses are suitably furnished, with some outstanding artwork on display. Pupils are able to personalise their own rooms and a system of new high quality mattresses is being rolled out to aid their sleep. However, a small number of areas require significant work. This extends to a lack of effective monitoring by the staff to ensure some pupils' privacy. This was being addressed during the inspection.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities which, although dominated by sports, also include clubs for technology, pottery, Latin and board games. An audit system evaluates attendance and pupils' responses. This encourages the development of activities that young people enjoy. The school has invested in providing increasing numbers of tutors to support the differing interests of the pupils. One parent stated that, 'My son is thriving in this environment and participates in many activities, including Duke of Edinburgh, drama productions, music, chefs clubs and weekend activities away.'

The school has a new healthcare team that responds effectively to the medical needs of the pupils. The nurses have completed boarding training and have become increasingly aware of their role. Good links are in place with external health professionals, who visit the school regularly and offer a functional and caring provision. These health professionals have included educational psychologists, who help with assessments of individual needs, as well as regular Doctors' surgeries. Recent mental health training has helped to improve the staff team's knowledge of areas such as depression and self-harm.

Medication administration is generally well organised, with the majority of medication being administered and recorded by house staff. Some pupils administer their own medication, and new monitoring systems are due to be rolled out to support them. This is necessary to decrease possible misuse of medication and increase awareness of correct administration.

Staff and parents are able to refer pupils who may need additional emotional support to a designated school counsellor. A multidisciplinary team, which includes the counsellor and school nurse, meets regularly to discuss pupils' welfare needs and formulate plans to increase the staff's ability to work well with the pupils. Plans have developed significantly since the last inspection, with staff becoming increasingly aware of pupils' backgrounds and factors that may affect their learning. Some inconsistencies exist between houses regarding the detail and understanding of the use of welfare plans, although there is an increasing awareness of the need for them to be in place.

Pupils enjoy a good variety of high quality meals. Mealtimes are a positive social occasion, when pupils have a wide choice of well-considered and nutritious menus. Individualised dietary needs are well catered for. A food committee allows pupils to have an input into the dishes served. Menus cater for special occasions, including national holidays, as well as 'beetroot day' during the inspection.

Contact between pupils and their families is encouraged, with good use of electronic communication systems. Parents report that they are kept in touch with issues that occur in boarding, through the use of letters, email and a half-termly newsletter.

Wide ranges of forums are in place to gain the views of pupils. These forums enable pupils to voice their opinions through house committees and the school council. This, in turn, enables pupils to influence improved practice. A whole school survey was carried out in the last academic year, raising staff awareness of how pupils felt about their boarding.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Pupils feel safe. For example, one pupil told the inspectors, 'We trust the staff and can talk to them about things, we also get on with each other which helps us to feel safe.' In the Ofsted inspection survey, 98% of parents stated that they felt their children were safe.

The school site is a safe environment, with regularly updated risk assessments relating to security, health and safety and fire checks. All boarding houses are accessible only through a keypad. This helps to ensure that only appropriate people can access the houses. Some areas of the site are not well lit, and others can be accessed by those determined to come on site. This has not resulted in any concerning events, but is being examined by the senior leadership team to fully support pupils' safety. To decrease levels of risk for the pupils, staff have utilised external professionals, including police reports about the locality, and links to sexual health agencies. Training in radicalisation has increased staff and pupil awareness of some of the dangers of social media and the internet. Effective filters are in place for all the school's IT systems to keep pupils safe.

Pupils are well aware of their ability to talk to a range of adults if they wish to raise concerns or complaints. Records of complaints show that senior staff have responded swiftly to issues raised by parents. These records show more detailed outcomes than those for complaints raised by pupils through the school's online system.

Effective policies and procedures are in place to respond to pupils who may go missing, including house signing in systems and regular registrations. On the rare occasion that pupils are unaccounted for, police and staff actively work together to support the safety of the pupils.

Pupils display positive and considered behaviours towards their peers. This is achieved through clear boundaries and a consistent approach from staff and prefects. Pupils comment that poor behaviours are responded to quickly. For example, a pupil told the inspectors, 'Staff have meetings with us to talk about why we are not getting on, but it all gets sorted out.' Where poor behaviours require specific sanctions, these are recorded and reviewed by senior staff to ensure that they are appropriate.

Recruitment procedures ensure that all adults working, or in unsupervised contact, with pupils are safe to do so. Recent improvements in the procedures mean that criminal records checks are now being completed on a more regular basis with a lack of reliance

on self-disclosure.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. This includes increasing their awareness of the triggers and signs of sexual exploitation, neglect and abuse. Procedures are in place to respond effectively when concerns are raised. Records show that concerns are taken seriously by all members of the staff team. Good links are in place with the local safeguarding board and local authority designated officer to enable good sharing of welfare-related information. These safeguards help to keep pupils safe.

When necessary, the staff promote effective links with social workers and children who are looked after. They prepare good information for statutory reviews and participate in planning for children's future stability. Local authorities praise their hard work, perseverance and individualised support, which have enabled pupils to experience consistency in periods of change in other parts of their lives. This builds resilience and self-esteem because pupils feel that staff are helping them to see themselves as important, and to achieve their goals that will underpin their success in the future.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

An experienced and enthusiastic senior staff team leads the school. The headteacher has changed since the last full boarding inspection. Boarding is seen as an integral part of pupils' experience. There is ongoing sharing of information between school and boarding, with a consistent culture of high expectations. There is a good mix of new and more experienced staff. This ensures that fresh attitudes towards boarding are regularly sought. New staff report that they are made welcome, and have a good induction into the provision, including learning about boarding and how to support pupils. Staffing ratios have recently improved and plans are in place to increase the staffing ratio in the evenings, so that more activity opportunities can be developed.

Staff receive regular updates to basic training, and a good system is in place for highlighting when refresher training is necessary. Records relating to more specialist training do not clearly show that all staff have completed courses. This could affect the ability of the staff team to be fully aware of how to meet the specific needs of some pupils.

Members of the governing body perform external scrutiny of the boarding provision. Their tenacity in improving the provision has led to some significant changes in the fabric of some of the boarding houses. This has increased the pupils' comfort and enjoyment. Internal monitoring systems include assessments of each house's improvement plans. These increase the senior staff's awareness of ongoing issues throughout the boarding houses, allowing them to recognise areas of weakness and respond to these.

Staff receive annual appraisals of their working practice. This has encouraged staff to evaluate their role, and look at training to improve the service. However, staff do not receive regular recorded supervisions that enable them to discuss their role and their care of pupils. More positively, staff do have excellent relationships with their seniors and continually discuss pupils. Nevertheless, this good practice is not formally recorded. The lack of clinical supervision is a notable area for improvement with the healthcare team, especially for registered nurses.

The vast majority of parents are exceptionally supportive of the school's emphasis on individualised development. One parent highlighted their son's achievements, by stating that: 'All this has been possible due to the fantastic support, encouragement and learning ethos of the school/house system. We believe his success and well-rounded outlook is attributed to the excellent opportunities he has had both academically and pastorally. An influx of new staff in recent years has provided our son with excellent role models and given him a real desire to achieve.'

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 exceed the standard of good and result 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	
Social care unique reference number	SC042055
DfE registration number	

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	Boarding School
Number of boarders on roll	632
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	11 to18
Headteacher	
Date of previous boarding inspection	
Telephone number	01384 817300
Email address	reception@oshsch.com

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