

Shaftesbury School

Dorset Local Education Authority

Shaftesbury School, Salisbury Road, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8ER

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Shaftesbury School is a co-educational academy catering for approximately 100 students aged 11– 18. At the time of the inspection, the school had 88 boarders, the majority being international students. The boarders are accommodated at Barton Hill House, situated a short walk away from the main school site.

The school is located in Shaftesbury, Dorset. The last inspection of the boarding provision took place in June 2014.

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 May 2017

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| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account | Good |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | Good |
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| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | Good |
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The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Date of last inspection: 4 June 2014

Key findings from this inspection

This boarding school is good because:

- Young people who board have access to a range of opportunities. Encouragement by staff ensures that they grow in confidence and develop independence skills.
- Most young people who board make excellent academic progress and are successful in achieving a place at university.
- Young people who board live in a highly inclusive community, forming positive and good relationships. The young people encourage and support one another, have fun while learning and feel safe. They respect each other and develop a strong sense of their own value and self-worth.
- The leadership and management of boarding are good. Boarding forms an important part of the whole school structure and fully complements the education component of the school. The leaders and managers provide strong leadership; they are supported by the school's senior staff team. Staff have high aspirations for the young people and have created a structured and supportive environment, which encourages boarders to take responsibility for themselves and others.
- All of the national minimum standards are met.

The boarding school's areas for development:

- Ensure that all recording is evaluative and signed and dated by the author.
- Ensure that all staff receive adequate levels of formal supervision and training in line with the boarding house policy.
- Ensure that boys' bedrooms are refurbished to ensure that there is consistency across the boarding house.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people who board achieve good outcomes. They benefit from a safe and supportive environment where courtesy and respect for others are promoted.

It is a real strength of the school that so many staff have a pastoral concern for the young people, both formal and informal. The young people themselves commented favourably on their positive relationships with staff, and the availability of different staff to help them if they have problems. Staff and young people form positive

relationships and feel secure in the knowledge that worries or complaints are addressed quickly and positively. For those young people that do not have English as their first language, additional teaching support is provided. Young people who board and their parents recognise the positive impact that boarding has had on their independence skills. In particular, they commented on the improvement in their use of the English language.

Young people are supported well to prepare for their moves into adulthood. A wide variety of planned enrichment activities, tutorial programmes and learning support complement the young people's academic studies. Examples of learning include safe use of the internet, healthy eating, substance misuse and issues in relation to bullying, gender and sexuality.

Good health is promoted through the use of leisure facilities, including access to a swimming pool and external health professionals. Those young people that require medication are supported safely by a passionate and experienced school nurse.

The head of boarding and the staff team place a strong emphasis on providing boarders with a healthy, balanced diet. Mealtimes are occasions when young people engage in healthy banter and plan activities. Young people 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. They reported that this has enriched their boarding experience and taught them to become considerate to others.

The boarding provision is of a very good and safe standard. Bedrooms and bathrooms are designed to meet the needs of the genders and age groups of the young people. Girls' accommodation is impressive, and it is clear that they take pleasure individualising their rooms. The boys' accommodation, including one bathroom, requires some refurbishment to ensure that there is consistency in the quality of the accommodation.

Inclusion and consultation with young people who board remain central to the ethos of the boarding house, and there are a number of different ways by which their views are sought. House meetings and discussion groups provide young people with opportunities to contribute to the ongoing development of the boarding provision.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The safety of the boarding provision is good. Young people said that they feel safe and that this is due to many factors, for example knowing that there are staff they can talk to, and knowing that the building is safe.

Young people live in an environment that provides good physical safety. For example, they have their own accommodation, secured by their own personal fob entry key, and systems are in place to protect boarders from safety hazards. This

safety is demonstrated through the routine use of policies and procedures, which are reviewed as circumstances change. All equipment used is regularly checked and serviced to ensure that it is safe. Good assessment systems are in place for on-site and off-site activities and organised trips. In addition, young people know and understand how to use the recreational areas safely, both indoors and outdoors.

Staff regularly review a range of effective policies. These include safe recruitment, bullying and safeguarding. Staff report that they are provided with a range of training opportunities, for example first aid, safeguarding, understanding child sexual exploitation and positive behaviour management. It was noted during the course of the inspection that some staff would benefit from more frequent training to ensure that they can support young people with practice that remains safe and current and is underpinned by knowledge and research.

At the point of this inspection, there were no reported safeguarding concerns or incidents of physical intervention, and no reports of any young people going missing. Staff and young people are confident and understand procedures, should any of these issues arise in the future.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The leadership and management of the boarding provision are good. Boarding is well organised, and the senior management team is ably led by the head of the school. Strong leadership and management lead to a committed group of staff that understands the aims and ethos of boarding, and the roles and areas of responsibility of members of staff. 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 house. Staff commended the depth of knowledge and compassion of the head of boarding.

The head of the boarding provision is highly qualified and experienced. He demonstrates a passion and commitment to continuously developing the provision. Young people are making good and effective use of the student council, for example contributing to the recruitment process, planning activities and developing the menus.

Staff spoke highly of the informal and formal support that they receive from the head of boarding. However, it was noted that supervision and appraisals are not regularly taking place. The head of boarding must ensure that the performance, practice and training requirements of the staff are kept under review. Leaders need to drive a more consistent approach to recording information.

The boarding provision's staff team has remained stable, except for a few changes more recently, and safer recruitment procedures are followed. A minor issue relating to the consistent use of the induction checklist was identified during the course of the inspection but was addressed swiftly.

All staff contribute to the improvement of the boarding provision. Effective use is made of stakeholders' and parents' feedback, and young people's views are valued and proactively sought. Regular student satisfaction surveys and student council meetings are an integral part of boarding life, and this helps to shape the development of the boarding provision.

The head of boarding monitors all records, policies and documents. However, evaluation of the information needs to improve to ensure that accurate analysis informs the strategic development of the boarding provision.

In addition to the statement of the school's boarding principles, the school provides a range of helpful material to parents and young people who choose to board, including a handbook and website. These documents continue to be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the boarding provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Boarding school details

Social care unique reference number: SC042320

Head teacher/teacher in charge: Mark Blackman

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors

Linda Bond: social care inspector

Mr David Kidner: social care inspector



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