

Claremont School

Claremont School (St Leonards) Limited

Claremont School, Baldslow, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7PW

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Claremont is a co-educational day and boarding school for children from the age of one to 18. The nursery, pre-prep and preparatory schools are in St Leonards-on-Sea and the senior school is in Bodiam. The school is an independent school for 800 pupils with up to 110 boarding places. The school provides residential care for pupils from 11 to 18 years old in two boarding houses within a short drive from the main school sites. The school offers full-time and weekly boarding. At the date of inspection, students from 28 different nationalities were boarding.

An education inspection took place in April 2016 and the school was judged as outstanding.

Inspection dates: 22 to 24 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The boarding school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Date of last inspection: First welfare inspection

Key findings from this inspection

This boarding school is outstanding because:

- Students from 28 countries live in an inclusive environment where they learn and celebrate their different cultures. Students feel like they are living in a 'home from home'. Boarding fully underpins their learning, and academic success is outstanding.
- Students make exceptional progress, some from a starting point where boarding seemed an impossibility. They make friends, embrace each other's differences and support each other to achieve their goals. Students enjoy warm and positive relationships with staff, describing them as being like family.
- Senior leaders have been successful in embedding a safeguarding culture throughout the entire school. Staff use software to record any issues and senior leaders analyse trends. Senior leaders identify any emerging issues for students and ensure that they have the necessary support.
- The boarding school benefits from exceptional leadership. Senior leaders are inspirational, confident and ambitious to continually challenge and improve practice. They identify areas for improvement, such as the need for the provision of a further common room.
- Staff are unreservedly committed to student welfare. They consider carefully the emotional well-being of students, making bespoke arrangements to ensure that students thrive in boarding. Staff assure each student's privacy and dignity.
- Students live in an environment that is furnished, decorated and maintained to an exceptional standard. They demonstrate the pride they have in their boarding areas by taking excellent care of them and keeping them clean.
- Students' behaviour is exceptional. They respect the boundaries in place to keep them safe. Students aspire to be prefects who model excellent manners, behaviour and maturity.
- There is excellent integration between boarding staff and education staff. They work together providing a holistic approach so that each student is ready and eager to learn. Students demonstrate a remarkable attitude to their education, actively seeking opportunities outside of the school day to further their studies.
- Staff demonstrate a wholehearted commitment to the students. They enjoy being with them, are responsive to their needs and provide a listening ear when students are experiencing difficulties, such as feeling lonely or homesick.
- Housemasters ensure that the staff team is well trained. They align their training programme with the needs of the current cohort, taking account of the senior leaders' analysis of the presenting needs.
- Parents speak in the most positive terms about the boarding. They say that staff are doing a fantastic job and cannot praise them enough. A parent said, 'It is the best school I have ever experienced.'

The boarding school's areas for development:

- Staff use two different methods to record the administration of medication. This has resulted in discrepancies between the two systems and does not always identify who administered the medication.
- On occasion, students have to find a member of staff to assure them that they have signed out when leaving the boarding house. This is not appropriate for all students.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Review the system of recording medication administration.
- Review the arrangements to ensure that students sign out when leaving the boarding house.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Boarding is an integral and valued part of the school community. Academic and care staff work as one team to ensure the best possible outcomes. Boarding students invite day students over to their home. Teachers held an assembly on boarding so that day students understand the provision.

Boarding students make exceptional progress. They demonstrate a commitment to their learning, such as doing extra study beyond the planned hours of prep time. Some students have complex needs that staff meet to an excellent standard. Staff responses to specific needs are child-centred, with individual programmes designed to nurture students to enable them to thrive. One parent said, 'The staff have done outstanding work with a complicated boy.'

Housemasters plan the boarding population carefully so that individual characteristics and needs are taken into account. If a student experiences difficulties in the dormitory or house, staff are quick to respond to resolve issues. Strategies are successful, such as boarders moving dormitory or moving boarding house. One student had a 'calming effect' on another student who was then able to complete the academic year. Students are able to increase their overnight stays in boarding and to develop their confidence and social interaction skills, some from a starting point of social isolation.

The multicultural community celebrates difference and enables understanding and

tolerance. A member of staff said, 'We actively promote British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.' Students are free to express their own faith without fear of discrimination, for example saying a prayer at lunchtime.

Staff are very knowledgeable about students' needs. They are sensitive to the ongoing and emerging needs of students, including their emotional well-being. Students who were once homesick now relish their boarding experience and want to stay for additional years. Students are at ease, knowing that staff are taking appropriate action to ensure their well-being. All students identify adults they can turn to.

Staff meet students' health needs in full; for example, they ensure that overseas students are registered with a local doctor. The school nurse is able to give guidance about important health needs, creating health care plans if necessary. This includes utilising other agencies such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) when necessary. Staff protect student's privacy and dignity when addressing their health needs. They treat students with the utmost respect. A student expressed his appreciation about how staff had driven him 'all over the place' to get the necessary treatment. Another student said, 'The boarding staff have always supported me when I need help and when I am feeling unwell.' A parent said, 'They have been incredibly successful in meeting his needs. They have been excellent. It is a great credit to them.'

Staff are aware of the risks of students bringing in medication from overseas. They follow the established procedures to ensure that all medication is prescribed in the United Kingdom. They use over-the-counter (OTC) medication to treat minor ailments. Staff use two systems to record medication administration and a running stock check. On occasion, there are discrepancies between the two systems for OTC medication, such as who administered it.

A comprehensive admissions procedure is in place. Staff induct new students particularly well. They ensure that student profiles are in place, especially for international students. They ensure that new students meet all the key people and orientate themselves in the local community. Staff are aware that some students may be homesick and regularly engage with them to ensure students' ongoing emotional well-being. Staff are available to students at all times. They appoint other students as additional support to guide new students during the settling-in period.

Staff support students towards independence; for example, some students do their own laundry. Students complete an exeat request form when wanting to visit relatives or friends, travelling independently if appropriate.

Students enjoy warm and positive relationships with staff and with each other. They feel like they are living in a family. They have fun while learning about themselves and others. A former student expressed her appreciation of the care provided in a

thank you card, stating, 'Thanks, I love you so much. You have been the best host family ever.' Another student, who is currently resident, said, 'I could not ask for a better housemaster. I can talk to him about anything.'

Students value the range of activities available to them, for example trips into London. They develop personal and social skills so that they can represent themselves and the school to a very high standard.

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

Senior leaders and managers demonstrate professionalism and commitment to exceed safeguarding standards. Of particular note are the designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) who provide outstanding leadership. They are respected role models who have been successful in embedding a safeguarding culture throughout the school. The DSLs work transparently, seeking advice from other safeguarding professionals to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of students.

Senior leaders have introduced a software tool that they use to monitor, report and analyse students' welfare. All staff are diligent in adding any concerns about students' well-being. Students trust staff and tell them of any concerns they have about themselves, others or situations at home. The comprehensive monitoring and recording systems allow leaders to build up a picture of each individual student's needs. They develop pastoral plans if necessary to guide staff about how to provide the best possible support. Students have access to a teenage mentoring, counselling and support service. The holistic approach, considering fully the welfare of each individual student, is impressive. Senior managers go beyond expectations to ensure that any student in need gets the right help and support such as anger management. Students are physically, emotionally and mentally healthy.

The DSLs use the safeguarding software tool to provide an oversight of the key issues and trends within the whole school environment, for example emotional well-being and mental health. They are able to direct resources, such as staff training in emotional resilience. They maximise the opportunity, from the trends and patterns they identify, to promote students' welfare to the highest possible standard.

Students, from a multitude of different nations, enjoy each other's company. Students enjoy learning about other cultures, values and beliefs. There is no bullying, racism or discrimination. Staff support them to understand worldwide issues from different perspectives. There is a fully inclusive culture with students living in harmony in a peaceful environment.

Students are proud to be part of the school. They present as positive ambassadors, reflecting the culture and high expectations of the school. Behaviour is exemplary. Staff expect students to sign out of the boarding house when they leave the premises. On occasion, students must seek out staff to assure them that they have done this. This does not underpin the culture of trust and independence.

Staff show exceptional awareness of the risks that the internet poses. For example, a member of staff noticed a screen wallpaper on an electronic device and identified a potential safeguarding issue. Staff follow the clear channels for reporting concerns so that DSLs can assess risk and take swift action. Students receive education through the comprehensive personal, social, health and economic programmes. They demonstrate an understanding of the risks in the cyber world and a mature attitude to the use of personal electronic devices.

Staff demonstrate astute practice, noticing small changes in behaviour that alert them to any emerging needs. Staff discuss such observations with other professionals to establish early intervention programmes. Feedback from parents has been effusive in praise of how staff have helped their children blossom. A member of staff said, 'Safeguarding is taken very seriously at the school. As part of their induction, the students are advised who they can seek support, help and guidance from and there are reminders throughout the house of the DSL.' A student said, 'If I need something, they always help. I treat them like my second family.'

The recruitment process is exceptional. All necessary checks are in place to appoint only suitable adults to have contact with students. The proprietor plans for future posts, employing staff in advance to ensure that the member of staff embraces the safeguarding culture.

Key people ensure that students live in a safe physical environment. They utilise regular health and safety audits to ensure ongoing safety. Outside contractors certify the safety of crucial equipment, such as fire appliances. Students undergo regular trial evacuations so that they know how to leave the building in an emergency.

Staff ensure that parents of overseas students arrange an education guardian. They provide a policy for parents setting out their expectations of the education guardian's role to ensure students' ongoing welfare and safety, for example during school holidays.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Senior leaders are inspirational, confident and ambitious to continually challenge and improve practice. Their passion to place students at the centre of practice and improve outcomes extends throughout the entire staff team. They are role models for staff and students, successfully establishing a culture of respect and acceptance across the school community.

Housemasters show exceptional leadership. They provide guidance to staff who demonstrate an understanding of the national minimum standards and how to apply them in practice. Housemasters arrange training that is pertinent to the role. Staff are competent in supporting students with a range of needs. A strength of the school is the staff team. Staff know each student's needs, strengths and idiosyncrasies. Staff like spending time with them, with a genuine sense of

enjoyment of the different personalities and cultures. Staff have high expectations of students who embrace and accept the standards expected of them.

Staff understand their roles and receive regular training to ensure that they are competent and knowledgeable. Staff see working in boarding as a vocation and unreservedly show a commitment to provide the best possible care. They have established a culture in the whole community that welcomes feedback and comments. Staff address issues swiftly without students needing to resort to the formal complaints procedure.

Staff communicate exceptionally well with parents and guardians, especially given that many parents are overseas and may be in a different time zone. Staff are responsive to their concerns or requests, including during school holidays.

Staff have been successful in developing the role of the prefect, which is an exemplar to other schools. Students aspire to become a prefect, knowing that they will undergo a rigorous selection process that assesses their suitability. Prefects are role models to younger students, demonstrating empathy and sensitivity to students who may be adjusting to boarding.

Senior management monitoring of the boarding is exemplary. The proprietor maintains careful oversight of the school. He spends copious amounts of time with staff and students, including sharing meals with students who board. He reads the various reports that leaders submit to him, providing guidance and challenge when necessary. Senior leaders concentrate on ensuring compliance with national minimum standards as well as considering creative ways to improve the boarding experience while the provider provides proficient oversight.

Accommodation is to a very high standard. Students take care of where they live. They live in a warm and homely environment. The new boarding home has already established an 'esprit de corps' and feedback from the students is excellent. Senior leaders are aware to consider carefully the physical outlay of the building should both genders be accommodated there in the future. Staff listen to students and their ideas about the creative use of space, for example ideas about an additional common room. Maintenance staff are on hand to attend to any necessary repairs promptly.

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 differences 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.

Inspectors approved the application, as part of this inspection, for a material change to register the second boarding provision.

Boarding school details

Social care unique reference number: 1159395

Principal: Mr Giles Perrin

Headteacher: Mrs Abra Stoakley

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors:

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