

Ashwicke Hall School

Ashwicke Hall, Marshfield, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 8AG

Inspection date

12 February 2018

Overall outcome

Boarding

The school does not meet all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

The overall experiences and progress of children

- The weaknesses identified in how well children are helped and protected impact negatively on their overall experiences.
- The arrangements to ensure that boarders' privacy is respected have improved since the last inspection. Privacy 'pods' or room dividers have been purchased for each child, giving them increased personal space in their bedrooms. Not all rooms have been furnished with these pods yet, but plans are underway to complete this work.
- Each child now has a lockable drawer and/or storage facility in which they can keep personal items safe.
- The ensuite bathrooms in the boys' accommodation now have lockable doors.
- Improvements have been made to the common rooms to make them more homely. They now contain softer furnishings, games and posters. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms.
- Boarders are now given a daily 'snack box' so that they can make their own snacks and drinks in their boarding accommodation.
- The opportunities for boarders to provide feedback to leaders and managers about their boarding experiences have improved.
- Staff regularly meet with boarders, surveys are carried out frequently and each house has a comments/suggestion box. Records that staff keep about the feedback that boarders provide do not adequately demonstrate the actions that staff have taken in response or the resulting outcomes.
- Boarders are now given regular opportunities to meet and talk with an independent listener.

How well children are helped and protected

- Since the last inspection, the staff team has been provided with additional safeguarding training. Safeguarding concerns are discussed routinely at the weekly leadership meetings. However, not all child protection concerns are managed effectively and not all investigations are rigorous.
- Leaders and managers have not referred all safeguarding concerns to child protection agencies as they should.
- Safeguarding records are not always well maintained and do not always demonstrate the actions taken by staff or give the details of the outcome of the concerns raised. These weaknesses are the same as inspectors found at the last full inspection.

- Senior staff have completed safer recruitment training, the single central record is now maintained and staff do not start at work until Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) have been returned. Despite leaders and managers having been trained in safer recruitment, gaps in employment history are not always identified or rigorously scrutinised. For example, information on a candidate's application form contradicted the information provided in a reference. Leaders and managers had not identified this discrepancy.
- Not all references that are obtained are from recent employers, and although leaders and managers state that they verify references, records do not clearly show what was discussed.
- Leaders and managers failed to check the registration of a healthcare professional who they had recently appointed. As a result, they do not know whether the professional is registered to undertake the role.
- DBS checks are now carried out on adults who are not employees but who live on the school site. However, leaders and managers have failed to ensure that a written agreement relating to the safeguarding of children is in place between the school and these adults.
- Leaders and managers have recruited a nurse to permanently manage the healthcare and medication provision in the school. Despite this positive move, the management of medication is still not safe enough and places children at risk.
- Medication that children bring with them from overseas is not verified by a pharmacist or a general practitioner in the United Kingdom. Consequently, staff have failed to assess what this medication is for and whether it is permissible to administer in this country. In addition, staff are regularly administering medication to children without that medication having a prescription label. As a result, staff do not accurately know what the medication is for, who should be receiving it, and when it should be given.
- The arrangements for fire safety have improved. Automatic release mechanisms have been fitted to bedroom doors, meaning that these doors now close automatically when the alarm sounds. Fire drills are now held regularly during the boarding time, and records about who attended the drill are now starting to be kept. Fire safety equipment is regularly checked.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

- Progress since the full inspection has been too slow. Insufficient action was taken immediately following the full inspection and until a new leadership team started in post in November 2017.
- Since the appointment of the new leadership team, a new action plan has been developed that identifies the activities that leaders and managers plan to take to address the previously unmet minimum standards.
- To provide increased challenge and oversight of the school's performance, leaders and managers are working with a consultant, and a governing body has been established.
- At this monitoring visit, inspectors identified continued weaknesses in the management of medication, the vetting of new staff and the management of safeguarding concerns. Although some previously unmet standards are now met, those relating to safeguarding are not. Leaders and managers' monitoring of these

areas remains weak.

- The records pertaining to the administration and auditing of medication require improvement. On occasions, records are written in pencil, which means that they can be erased. Staff do not always record the child's full name, the dose of medication they have been given and who has administered it.
- Staff were unable to demonstrate that they maintain records about how much medication they have at the school, or the amount of medication they dispense. As a result, stock balances are unknown.
- A new electronic recording system has been put in place. Leaders and managers have not identified discrepancies that the inspectors saw between the electronic medication records and additional handwritten records. On several occasions, staff failed to note on the electronic record when they had given children analgesic medication. This means that not all staff supporting the children will be aware of when the next dose could safely be administered. This means that there is a risk that the children could be given too much.
- Boarding staff are now provided with additional training and regular supervision to support them in their role. However, the effectiveness of the training is not yet evident.

Compliance with national minimum standards for boarding schools

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

- 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 standard 3.4)
- The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (National minimum standard 11.1)
- The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary. (National minimum standard 13.1)
- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. (National minimum standard 13.3)
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met. (National minimum standard 13.4)
- The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the wellbeing of pupils. (National minimum standard 13.5)
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate. (National minimum standard 13.9)
- Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (National minimum standard 14.1)
- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with pupils, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with pupils. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence. (National minimum standard 14.3)

The school now meets the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. Boarders are informed who this person is, and how to contact them, and they are easily accessible. Boarders are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside telephone numbers, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner, to contact in case of problems or distress. (National minimum standard 2.3)
- Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for boarders, which are reasonably accessible from the sleeping accommodation. Separate toilet facilities are provided for boys and girls unless each toilet facility is provided in a separate room intended for use by one pupil at a time, the door to which is capable of being secured from

inside. Toilet and washing facilities provide appropriate privacy for boarders.
(National minimum standard 5.3)

- 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 standard 5.4)
- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. (National minimum standard 7.1)
- In addition, fire drills are regularly (at least once per term) carried out in 'boarding time'. (National minimum standard 7.2)
- Senior boarding staff have an adequate level of experience and/or training. (National minimum standard 13.6)
- For all persons over 16 (not on the roll of the school) who after April 2002 began to live on the same premises as boarders but are not employed by the school, an enhanced certificate with a barred list information must be obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). (National minimum standard 14.2)
- 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 standard 15.1)
- Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Boarders are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. (National minimum standard 17.1)

School details

Unique reference number	137950
Social care unique reference number	SC472610
DfE registration number	803/6008
Inspection number	10043512

The inspection of boarding provision 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	Independent school
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Number of boarders on roll	50
Headteacher	Amanda Woods
Telephone number	01225891841
Website	ashwickehallschool.sabis.net
Email address	info@ashwicke.sabis.net
Date of previous boarding provision inspection	3–5 May 2017

Information about this school

- Ashwicke Hall School was registered in February 2012 as a co-educational boarding school for 247 pupils aged 11 to 18. The school is part of the SABIS school network located across the world.
- The school is based at Ashwicke Hall, a period building situated in extensive grounds in a rural location near to the city of Bath, in the south-west of England.
- All pupils speak English and most speak other languages in addition to English.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- There are no pupils who come into the category of being regarded as disadvantaged through being known to be eligible for free school meals or being looked after.
- The school does not receive any sports funding.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Students take both IGCSE and Advanced Placement exams at the school, which is a certified examination centre for both Cambridge IGCSE examinations (UK) and the College Board Advanced Placement examinations (USA).

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted without notice. It was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools.
- The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress that the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection in May 2017.
- This was an integrated inspection; the school and the boarding accommodation were inspected at the same time. School and social care inspectors worked together during the inspection.
- The school's action plan was deemed inadequate following its submission to the Department for Education in August 2017.
- The lead Her Majesty's Inspector met with the principal and an external consultant. Inspectors also met with both teaching and non-teaching staff to ascertain the progress made since the previous inspection towards meeting all the required standards of the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding.
- The lead Her Majesty's Inspector visited classrooms and looked at pupils' workbooks. The social care regulatory inspectors visited the boarding accommodation. They met with teaching staff, boarding staff and a nurse.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils both formally and informally.
- Inspectors met with the designated lead for safeguarding and reviewed pupils' and staff files and records.
- Inspectors toured the boarding accommodation and healthcare facilities.

Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sharron Escott, social care lead inspector	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
David Kidner, social care team inspector	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Paula Lahey, regulatory inspector	Regulatory Inspector Manager

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