

Sexeys School

Cole Road, Bruton, Somerset BA10 0DF

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Inspection date

20/06/2019

Context of the inspection

An integrated full inspection of this school was carried out in March 2019. At that inspection, the school and the boarding provision were judged to be inadequate. This inspection was undertaken to monitor any progress made to address the shortfalls. This inspection had a focus on the safety and well-being of children.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The headteacher has improved safeguarding processes and practices. A forensic review of children's files has identified poor practice. This has resulted in processes changing to manage the risk of future mistakes. This has paved the way in allowing leaders to have better oversight and scrutiny of concerns. These systems are in their infancy and are not yet embedded into practice.

The headteacher has embraced support offered by the local authority and other partners. An independent social work consultant provides much needed clinical supervision, challenge and critique.

Communication in respect of children has improved because daily meetings bring together safeguarding staff. Discussions ensure that plans are in place for children and that they are reviewed in a timely manner. Important information is then shared with all relevant staff.

Oversight by governors has improved. The governing body has appointed two new professional and experienced governors. One of these is the safeguarding governor. They are visible and are already starting to support and challenge the school through regular visits.

Some inconsistencies remain. Behaviour management is not always managed well. Expectations are not always clear or consistent. At times, children receive blanket and inappropriate consequences. Some children are not happy with this aspect of their care.

Staff do not provide consistent rules and boundaries. Children get differing responses,

depending on which house they live in and on which member of staff they ask. This leads to confusion and frustration.

Some children told the inspector that they do not always feel listened to. Systems put in place to help understand children's views are not wholly effective. For example, the introduction of a menu improvement group has not been entirely successful. A lack of structure means that actions are not always completed.

There are ongoing issues with staff shortages across the school and in the boarding houses. These have placed additional pressure on the headteacher and she is undertaking shifts during the evenings and weekends in the boarding houses.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:

- The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. (NMS 6.3)
- 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. (NMS 11.1)
- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. (NMS 13.3)
Specifically, in relation to the leadership of safeguarding matters.
- The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the well-being of pupils. (NMS 13.5)
In particular, in relation to the management of safeguarding matters.
- 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. (NMS 14.1)
- Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders receives regular reviews of their boarding practice. (NMS 15.1)
Specifically, in relation to supervision for boarding staff and those staff who support children with, or who manage, safeguarding matters.

Inspection team

Tracey Ledder

social care inspector

Information about this school

Sexeys School is a maintained, mixed boarding school in Bruton, Somerset for 216 boarders aged 11 to 18 years. The school admits pupils from all over the United Kingdom and has a small number of pupils from overseas. It offers both day and termly boarding places. The boarding accommodation is provided in three houses, all of which are located on the school site.

School details

Unique reference number	137313
Social care unique reference number	SC039847
DfE registration number	933/5400

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.

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Type of school	Boarding school
Number of boarders on roll	479
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 18
Headteacher	Helen Cullen
Date of previous boarding inspection	19/03/2019
Telephone number	01749 813 393
Email address	hcullen@sexkeys.somerset.sch.uk

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