

Haberdashers' Adams

Haberdashers' Adams Grammar School, High Street, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7BD
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Haberdashers' Adams Grammar School is a voluntary-aided, selective, day and boarding boys' grammar school, which admits girls to the sixth form on a day basis. The school is operated by the Haberdashers' Federation. Being a state school, all tuition is free. Pupils' parents pay only the costs of boarding, making boarding an affordable attraction of the school. The school is located over two sites providing two boarding facilities.

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 May 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 24 January 2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are consistently positive about boarding at the school. They state that they have developed their independence, made great friends and enjoy having time to study. Staff are knowledgeable about all of the children within their care and are able to talk about their successes and personalities. Consequently, children feel settled, cared for and part of the school community.

Children's achievements are celebrated, and rewards encourage them to be involved with all aspects of their boarding experience. Children are positive about the importance placed on their learning and development. Some state that they have moved forwards due to the importance that staff place on success and individual study within the boarding provision.

Links between the school and the two boarding houses are strong. Boarding and school staff share essential information well. This helps to support children's well-being.

Staff provide a good range of activities. These range from sports clubs to a chess club and acting classes. These opportunities help children to develop socially, emotionally and physically.

Children's views are sought through regular meetings with staff. However, records of these meetings are insufficient. As a result, it is not always clear how staff have responded to suggestions from children. Children consistently raise concerns regarding the quality of the food, for example food being of poor quality, insufficient amounts of food or a lack of healthy options. Although managers state that this is being addressed, there is a lack of records to show that children's views are being considered.

Arrangements for dealing with formal complaints are good. Complaints from children are well responded to and recorded. Children know who to talk to if they are unhappy. An independent visitor is also available to further support children.

Staff promote children's health. Designated staff supervise consistently good health support and medication arrangements. Strong links with different professionals such as counsellors and local general practitioners ensure that children are well and that any health concerns are responded to.

Excellent communication between teaching staff, boarding staff and families supports children's welfare. There are designated times for children to keep in touch with their families. However, if a child's mobile telephone has been removed then they are unable to talk to their families in private. This is because children are unaware that they can make calls from the housemasters' study and the payphone.

The arrangements for children to move into the boarding provision are well organised. This includes a buddy system and consideration for matching children with friends in bedrooms. These arrangements help children to settle quickly.

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

Children feel safe. All staff are trained in safeguarding and are aware of how to respond should any concerns be raised. All incidents relating to children's safety are recorded. Good links are in place with the designated officer in the local authority and local safeguarding boards.

Staff undertake regular checks on the home environment to ensure that it is safe. Staff and children are aware of what to do if there is a fire. However, a risk assessment relating to the junior boarding house does not have a sufficiently detailed plan to address issues raised. Some recommendations raised in the fire risk assessment have not been acted upon. The management team told the inspector that this is because of the uniqueness of the building layout and its listed status. A subsequent fire officer's check has been completed to mitigate this risk and ensure children's safety. However, the details and outcome of this visit have not been recorded. As a result, fire safety arrangements cannot be confirmed as being complete.

Some children raise concerns that Wi-Fi speeds are slow and that the school's internet filter blocks the use of certain applications. However, this is done for good safeguarding reasons and protects children from the potential for online exploitation or grooming.

A new fingerprint system is in place in each boarding house. Although this system has had some teething problems, it has increased staff's awareness of where children are and has decreased the risks of children going missing from the school.

The behaviour of children is excellent. They respect the differences between themselves and act with consideration for the needs of others. Rewards help to promote good behaviours across the two boarding houses. However, the protocol for removing mobile phones as a sanction is not clearly recorded. Subsequently, children feel that some decisions are unfair.

Care plans are in place for children who have identified needs, such as medical conditions. These care plans help to increase staff awareness of children's individual needs and ensure that practice is consistent.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The leadership team is strong and ambitious for children. Staff are experienced and enthusiastic about children. This supports children to have a positive boarding experience.

School handbooks give general information about the principles of the boarding provision in the two boarding houses. They give good guidance to the children and their families about the basic rules and what to expect when they stay at the school.

Informal supervision meetings routinely take place between staff and managers. However, records of formal meetings are not available. Consequently, managers fail to show that staff are being fully supported. However, annual appraisals are completed well.

Staff training is well structured. Staff attend various courses that help to enhance their knowledge and skills. This helps them to understand their roles and how to ensure children's safety and well-being.

The new senior boarding house provides a pleasant and comfortable environment, with excellent communal facilities. These include a 1960s-style diner for children to prepare their own meals. This helps to develop their independence skills. The junior home continues to have a quirky yet pleasant design although the decor in some bathrooms requires improvement. In addition, some children have to walk through another's bedroom to get to their own. Children affected state that they do not feel that this is a concern as it does not significantly decrease their privacy.

The quality of the boarding provision is regularly monitored by the governing body, through regular visits, discussions and termly meetings. This helps to challenge managers, to develop procedures and to guide practice.

The leadership team has responded to most of the areas raised at the last inspection. Improvements have been made to welfare plans and staff training. The going missing policy now includes information from the police. Recommendations regarding children's privacy, staff supervisions and meeting minutes still need further development.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

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

- Ensure that suitable sleeping accommodation provided for boarders is well organised and managed with risk assessments undertaken and findings acted upon to reduce risk for all boarders. (National Minimum Standard 5.1)
This specifically relates to fire safety.
- Ensure that all boarders, including those with special dietary, medical or religious needs, are provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality, choice and variety. (National Minimum Standard 8.1)

Recommendations

- Consider the use of bedrooms to ensure that pupils do not have to move through others' rooms to get to either a bathroom or another boarding room.
- Ensure that managers and staff receive regular and effective supervision focused on children's experiences, needs, plans and feedback. Supervision sessions should be recorded.
- Record outcomes of the actions raised within pupils' meetings to highlight the response to their requests.
- Ensure that the physical environment is maintained to a high standard, is comfortable and meets the needs of the children. Any damage or wear and tear should be quickly and regularly repaired.
- Ensure that records of sanctions are clear, specifically with regard to mobile phones being removed.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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: SC020589

Type of school: Boarding School

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Inspectors

Andrew Hewston, social care inspector (lead)

Gareth Leckey, social care inspector



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