

The Swedish School Society

The Swedish School Society in London Ltd
82 Lonsdale Road, London SW13 9JS

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

The Swedish School Society is an independent school that provides Swedish education with a considerable proportion of lessons in English. The school is a charitable organisation run by the Swedish School Society in London Ltd. The school admits boys and girls aged from three to 19 years. At the time of the inspection, the school had 282 pupils on roll.

The sixth form is located in Richmond at the American International University. The school has boarding arrangements through host families for post-16 students. These are exchange students who usually spend six months to one year in the sixth form. At the time of the inspection, out of 113 six-form students, 81 were living in host families.

The deputy headteacher has the lead responsibility for the sixth form and boarding. She is line managed by the headteacher and supported by the host-families coordinator and a team of staff in pastoral roles, such as a counsellor, a nurse and teachers in mentoring roles. The leaders and managers are qualified and experienced in their roles.

Inspection dates: 17 to 19 September 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: 10 October 2016

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive highly individualised support that enables them to be safe and flourish while they are away from their own families. Young people have positive experiences in what is, for them, a different country. They learn from these experiences and make good progress across many different aspects of their lives.

The school's admission procedure is thorough. The information gathered through this process enables staff to know about the young people's needs and interests before they arrive. This knowledge enables an early risk assessment of needs and underpins the effectiveness of matching the young people with their host families.

Matching is excellent, and it is often based on shared interests, such as rugby or horses. Many of the young people said that they could not have been matched better. Several of the young people described their host family as just perfect for them.

Strong relationships between the young people and their host families have a positive impact on young people's experiences and their level of engagement. Young people said that they feel happy and included in the life of their host family. One young person said that despite knowing his host family for only a few weeks, he felt that they had made a bond.

There is a strong team of professionals working around the young people to promote their well-being. Each young person has two mentors and can easily access the school's counsellor. The school has provided effective enhanced support to the young people with additional psychological needs, such as when experiencing bereavement or feelings of social isolation. However, the records of the enhanced support are fragmented and welfare plans were not completed.

The young people with a medical diagnosis and particular health needs have health-welfare plans. With the help of the school nurse, leaders and managers have developed safe practices in relation to supporting the young people when they are unwell. However, the school's written health policies are underdeveloped. For example, medication storage and household remedies are not covered.

Young people's educational progress is excellent. Being immersed in the English environment helps the young people to develop their English language skills and confidence in communicating in English. This has a positive impact on their overall well-being. One mentor talked about how one young person's body posture changed over time as he matured into his true self.

Young people's behaviour is impeccable. They have fun while exploring London's museums and going to sporting fixtures, concerts, theatres and other places of

interest together. This helps them to develop further their friendships and social skills.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements are comprehensive and effective. The policy on keeping children and young people safe is implemented in practice and protects young people from harm. Training on safeguarding enables staff and host families to develop a good knowledge about a range of risks that teenagers may face and the help they need to be safe.

Young people are safe. There have been few safeguarding incidents in the past 12 months. The school identifies any safeguarding concerns promptly and manages them well by minimising and when possible, removing the risks before they escalate.

The school has a clear policy on curfews and a procedure for safeguarding young people when they are missing. The procedure is well known to all parties, including the young people. In the past 12 months, no young people have gone missing and there were only two occasions of unauthorised absences.

Young people reported feeling safe and secure. They talk regularly with their host families and staff about the potential risks to their safety and how to keep themselves safe. The police also visit the school and talk with the young people about being safe in London.

The thorough vetting of host families contributes to the safety of the young people. However, the school does not clearly evidence how it involves the whole household in the recruitment process and that it is a contractual responsibility for all adults to keep their guests under their supervision. The school is aware of this being an area for improvement and the contract format is under review.

Host families provide a physically safe environment for the young people. The host-families coordinator obtains evidence of the required health and safety checks for each household. She visits all of the accommodation annually to assess quality and safety.

The school's good links with the local safeguarding partners include the local fire brigade. The local fire officers visit the school and provide information to host families on fire safety in their homes. They also visited some host families to provide specific advice on the best fire-safety practices and evacuation plans.

All of the young people are trained as lifeguards and first aiders. However, not all of the host families have received training in first aid. This increases the risk of them not responding effectively to emergencies.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are highly visible in the school. They know the young people well and are highly ambitious for them. Leaders and managers make decisions in the best interest of the young people.

The school has published a clear statement of its boarding principles and practices. Leaders and managers ensure that the boarding is managed efficiently and in line with this document. Young people's views contribute to the school's evaluation of the boarding and its development.

Host families are highly satisfied with the information, guidance and support that they receive from the school and in particular, from the host-families coordinator. None of the hosts spoken to could think of anything that the school could do better.

Parents spoke highly about the school. One parent said, 'This is a fantastic school. I'm so happy and grateful that our daughter has the possibility to go there and stay with a very caring host family.' Another parent said that 'The host family is open, welcoming and kind towards our daughter.'

The school has an effective procedure for resolving complaints informally as well as through the formal complaints procedure. Leaders and managers address any concerns and complaints efficiently, robustly and honestly. They view complaints in a positive light, as opportunities to review, reflect on and improve the service that they offer.

Leaders and managers monitor the boarding provision against the national minimum standards for boarding schools. They have developed an improvement action plan and are working on its implementation. Staff receive good support and supervision from their line managers and have professional development plans that feed into the school's overall objectives.

The school has an effective board of governors. Governors have a good oversight of what is happening in boarding and receive regular updates between the formal governors' meetings. They are actively involved in monitoring the school and ensuring that it maintains high standards.

The school has links with the Swedish embassy and the Swedish Church in London. This helps to maintain the young people's ties with their cultural heritage while they enjoy learning about and experiencing life in modern Britain.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Recommendations

- To review and further develop the school's written policies on health, so that they provide more detail about the arrangements for promoting young people's health, medication storage, including household remedies and first aid.
- Complete written welfare plans for young people who have enhanced psychological needs.
- Amend the content of the contract between the school and the host families so that it covers all necessary information and is signed by every adult who lives in the household.
- Provide first aid training for adults in host families.

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: SC017403

Headteacher: Mrs Annika Simonsson Bergquist

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors

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