

# Five Islands Academy Boarding House St Mary's

Church Road, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly TR21 0NA

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

This academy provides boarding accommodation for up to 32 children. Children who are of secondary school age and do not live on the main island are generally required to board at this provision from Monday to Friday during term time.

**Inspection dates:** 24 to 26 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 requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

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

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement

**Date of last inspection:** 26 September 2013

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children receive care from a small and stable staff team whose members know them well. Their relationships are good and built on trust and mutual respect. The house parents spend time talking to children about a wide range of important issues. They care for them well and hold aspirations for each of them. These relationships help children feel safe and secure.

Children are making progress. They are doing well with their education. They get support through homework club and structured school work time each evening. Children take part in debates and challenge issues that are important to them. For example, they made posters and took part in a peaceful demonstration in respect of climate change.

Children have opportunities to socialise and undertake a wide range of activities. This would not be available to them if they did not board. Houseparents push boundaries to ensure that children take part in adrenalin-provoking activities. The activities are risk-assessed well and provide children with experiences that make lasting and fond memories.

Children and their families are positive about the boarding house. Parents feel confident that children are happy and well cared for. Children say that they feel safe and well looked after. They can identify an adult they can talk to should they have any worries or concerns.

Houseparents invest in children at the earliest opportunity. This helps to make their transition to boarding as smooth as possible. They take part in Year 6 camp and introduce children to the home as soon as they can. They are warm, nurturing and supportive and they want the best for each individual child.

The creation of child welfare plans captures key details of children and outlines any additional needs. The documents are not yet embedded into practice. Not all staff are referring to them to ensure a consistency in care.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Safeguarding practice and records are weak. The systems in place to understand and track what action is taken to safeguard and protect children are not effective.

Not all safeguarding concerns are escalated in line with policy. This includes referrals to the local authority designated officer. Therefore, concerns for children have not always had the right level of oversight.

The arrangements for the safekeeping and administration of medication are weak. An

absence of auditing means that staff do not know what medication they store. Staff do not have the information or parental consent required to be able to respond to all medical situations. The policy in place is not explicit enough. Leaders and managers took steps to rectify this during this inspection.

The safeguarding team meets on a regular basis to share information and discuss vulnerable children. Because of this, communication has improved. However, managers do not have a robust grip on what has been referred to children's services.

The social media policy is not robust enough. At times, communication between children is not monitored effectively. This has led to some upset for children.

**The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The leadership of the home is not yet good because some concerning weaknesses remain. Leaders have failed to address all the shortfalls identified at previous inspections. These are in respect of safeguarding children and management oversight.

Management oversight is weak. Policy and procedures are not always followed. At times, over-optimism and a lack of professional curiosity have obstructed decisive action. As a result, it is sometimes difficult to understand what has happened when there is a concern for a child. There is a lack of clarity in respect of accountability.

Not all staff receive regular and meaningful supervision. Children's needs and how to meet them are not always discussed. There is a lack of opportunity to reflect on children's experiences.

The skills and confidence of the houseparents has grown and developed. They have learned lessons from previous inspections, acted and made improvements. Records have been developed and these now need to be embedded into practice.

## **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:

- 11.1 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.
- 12.1 The school has and consistently implements a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils. This policy includes: measures to combat bullying, including cyberbullying, and to promote positive behaviour; school rules; disciplinary sanctions; when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 13.7 The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix 1.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
- 13.9 The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that references regarding prospective employees are verified.

### **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:** SC042065

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mrs Joanne Yeates

**Type of school:** boarding school

**Telephone number:** 01720 423 277

**Email address:** [houseparents@fiveislands.org](mailto:houseparents@fiveislands.org)

## Inspectors

Tracey Ledger, social care inspector (lead)  
Linda Steele, senior HMI



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