

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. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 May 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 1 May 2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The quality of care and support that children receive is good. The daily routine is organised well and effectively structured, balancing academic study with opportunities to relax and have fun. Children value the school and recognise the positive benefits of boarding. The residential staff team develops meaningful relationships with each child. Because of this, children feel secure and develop a sense of value and belonging.

There are appropriate numbers of staff on duty with a good mix of boarding and teaching staff. This helps to promote the ethos and culture of the school and encourages children to make use of extra study time in the evenings.

There are positive relationships between children and staff that reflect the mutual respect that they have for each other. Staff have high expectations for all the children to succeed academically and personally. This is reflected in the daily life of the school, with children continually encouraged to make good progress in their lives and to be responsible citizens.

Children treat everyone with respect and with consideration for their needs and feelings. Many children come from all parts of the world, but all become part of an inclusive community irrespective of their heritage.

Staff have a good understanding of children's physical health needs and monitor their healthcare plans to ensure that strategies are being followed. Staff also maintain oversight of the children's emotional well-being, and make themselves available to meet with any child who may be struggling with the boarding environment or having difficulties living away from home.

Consultation with children who board remains central to the ethos of the boarding provision, and there are several different ways by which their views are sought. House meetings and discussion groups provide children with opportunities to contribute to the ongoing development of the boarding provision. An example of this would be the change of menu that was made in response to the food committee's suggestions.

Children are supported to prepare for the transition into adulthood through learning and developing independence skills in accordance with their age and ability. This has been positively commented on by parents who value the support of their child's educational, social and emotional development. A parent reported, 'A truly inspirational and motivating environment for my child – physically, mentally and socially. We are privileged to be able to watch our son transform into a confident young man because of the impact the teachers and his peers have on him.'

Accommodation for children is of good quality. The school has implemented a programme of refurbishment for one of the buildings that is ongoing. Children can personalise their sleeping areas.

There is a range of extra-curricular activities available that promote children's emotional and physical development effectively.

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

Staff are alert to potential risks to children's safety and take prompt action in the light of any concerns. There is effective partnership working with other agencies and parents by senior staff, which helps to ensure that children remain safe. All children spoken to said that they felt safe and reported that they have a range of adults to speak with if they have any concerns or worries.

The designated lead for safeguarding has the necessary training and experience for the role. All staff receive safeguarding training that is commensurate with their duties in the school. As a result, staff understand their role in promoting the welfare of children and know how to identify and respond to any concerns that they may have or that children bring to them.

The school has an independent listener, along with a number of visitors to the school, whom the children can speak to should they have any concerns or worries.

Children are knowledgeable about the boundaries and rules and understand the reasons for them. Children are well behaved, know what acceptable behaviour is, and understand the consequences that staff may give them should they fail to meet the standard. These consequences are based on restorative practices as well as the withdrawal of privileges. These help children to understand the effects of their behaviours on others.

Routine maintenance, testing and servicing of equipment provide children with a well-maintained, safe and secure physical environment. Health and safety processes are robust, underpinned by detailed risk assessments which are updated to reflect changes in legislation. There have been visits from health and safety professionals and advice is sought as necessary to ensure the school is compliant with the necessary regulations.

Safe recruitment processes are generally in line with guidance. However, the process could be further strengthened by ensuring that the date and time are recorded when references have been verified, along with validating reasons why applicants left their previous roles.

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

Leaders show an active commitment to enriching the boarding experience and enhancing children's overall well-being. Leaders have high expectations of what they want to achieve and aspire to ensure that all children reach their full potential. However, some areas of leadership require improvement. This includes areas such as the managing of complaints and the training and supervision of staff.

Staff are not receiving regular and effective supervision. This limits the opportunity to consider the achievements of individual staff, assess areas of responsibility, discuss concerns about any children and consider training and development needs.

Some staff with responsibilities for caring for children have not received training to support their roles. For example, there are specific gaps in the administration of medication. Furthermore, boarding staff have not received targeted learning about the level of care that some children with SEND require. This is a missed opportunity to improve consistent care for children and to develop staff practice.

The management of complaints received by the school is weak. Leaders have not ensured that the school's complaints policy is used appropriately. For example, a complaint was made by children, and after three months they still have not received an update as to how their complaint is progressing. This is a missed opportunity for concerns raised by children to be formally heard and resolved to effect necessary change.

The governing body is visible and active and provides an appropriate balance of support and challenge on an ongoing basis. Governors undertake independent visits to the boarding accommodation and produce clear reports on their findings. There are systems in place to ensure that the governing body is kept fully informed of any safeguarding matters. This allows the governors to maintain good oversight of safeguarding practice at the school.

Although there are shortfalls in practice, leaders have a clear understanding and knowledge of strengths and weaknesses of both the school and the boarding provision, with clear plans in place to address areas for 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 standard(s) for boarding schools:

- 15.1 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.
- 15.4 Boarders are at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who is suitably qualified and experienced.
This specifically relates to staff training.
- 18.1 The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards.

Recommendations

- Ensure that systems of safer recruitment include checks on staff who have previously worked with children and vulnerable adults, with a focus on validating the reasons they have left those roles.

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

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Gary Hickey

Type of school: Boarding School

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Inspectors

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