

Rikkyo School in England

Rikkyo School In England Trust

The Rikkyo School in England, Guildford Road, Rudgwick, Horsham, West Sussex
RH12 3BE

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

The Rikkyo School in England was established in 1972 and is situated on the West Sussex/Surrey border, close to the village of Rudgwick. Rikkyo is an independent, co-educational school. All the boarding accommodation is located within the school grounds. At the time of this inspection, there were 187 students boarding at the school.

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

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 April 2023

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

Date of last inspection: 30 April 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Students are receiving individualised care from a knowledgeable staff team that works hard to create a large family feel. Students spoke confidently about their experiences in the school and how positive their lives are. They enjoy making friends and spending time with them.

Students are offered a variety of leisure activities, such as tennis, football, volleyball, singing, cooking, Japanese tea ceremonies, band practice and day trips to London. Students are unanimous in how much they enjoy these opportunities. Students who are new to the school feel welcomed by other students and staff. Students are supported to make new friendships. Staff encourage and facilitate students to continue with their hobbies.

Parents are positive about their children's experiences at the school. Parents are happy about how often they can speak to their children and believe communication from the school is good. However, one parent reported that they would like to be contacted when their children are sick and not just when they have recovered.

Health needs for students are well understood. An on-site, staffed surgery supports students with any day-to-day health concerns. Beyond this, if additional services are needed, school leaders have been quick to contact external professionals, such as child and adolescent mental health teams. When the response has not been good enough, leaders have commissioned their own assessments, and have also provided appropriate in-house support.

Medication is usually stored effectively. However, when students do not come for their required medication, records are not always completed. Medication is sometimes brought into the school without clear expiration dates. This undermines the safe dispensing of medication.

Students benefit from a wide range of people available for them to talk to about any concerns they may have. Older peer mentors, senior leaders and staff, including the chaplain, all provide students with the opportunity for safe discussion. Students know about the role of safeguarding leads.

Students' views are taken into account by leaders on a regular basis. There are ongoing surveys to help students to consider their experiences in the school, as well as more focused surveys into areas such as food and life in boarding. A student council, which has a strong voice in the school, meets regularly. The council has a vital role in enabling students of all ages to become involved in the organisation and planning of events.

The overall school living environment is positive. An ongoing programme of refurbishment has ensured that the school boarding areas are updated. However,

there is inconsistency in the individual boarding houses due to the differing age of the homes and how well they are used as living spaces. Senior leaders have acknowledged the disparity and there are plans in place to rectify this.

There are positive examples in the way that the school builds relationships with the local community. Links have been made with other schools to arrange football and tennis matches. Connections have been established with local community rambling groups. The school holds open days to help local people develop their understanding of what the school offers students and the community.

Parents and students spoke positively about the independence skills students have developed since coming to the school. However, there remain some areas for development. Some students would like further autonomy and independence. There is no clear pathway for older students to learn basic skills such as budgeting, cooking and planning.

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

Staff have completed appropriate training in relation to safeguarding and the well-being of students. Staff have proactively responded to concerns that they have witnessed and sought timely and appropriate support from relevant professionals. As a result, students receive comprehensive support to ensure that their well-being is promoted.

The staff recognise the triggers and behaviours of students who may be struggling physically or mentally. The timely sharing of concerns has, on occasion, prevented students' health from deteriorating.

Students do not go missing from the school. They know who they can talk to about anything that is worrying them. They have access to resources and independent help and support outside of the school.

When students suffer from mental health issues, they are supported well. Good communication aids the oversight from a multidisciplinary point of view. However, records of this do not always fully demonstrate that actions are monitored, and that professionals are fulfilling their responsibilities. Nonetheless, students are well cared for, and their emotional well-being and mental health needs are met.

While staff are clear about the safeguarding roles within the school, partnerships with local safeguarding professionals could be strengthened. Local authority designated safeguarding professionals have asked to deliver staff training; however, this has not yet happened.

Staff manage behaviour consistently and students are given the opportunity to reflect on the impact of their behaviour. However, records do not clearly differentiate between issues of concern and actual incidents where students have, or could have, suffered harm.

There is good oversight of potential risks. Fire risks are well known, and actions raised at the last fire assessment have been addressed. There is an ongoing plan for reviewing and updating risk assessments. A new health and safety guide, available in both Japanese and English, is being devised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders are focused and ambitious for the school and all students. There are clear aspirations for all students and a genuine aim for them to achieve their potential. Leaders monitor the school effectively. There are clear plans to develop and progress the school. These plans include aims for students, the staff and the boarding provision. As a result, leaders have a clear understanding of the progress that students make.

Leaders of the school demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the entire school, including all staff and students. They are clear about areas that need to improve. This has been supplemented by the recent appointment of a new bursar and changes to the senior leadership team.

There have been recent changes to the governing arrangements of the school. For example, new subcommittees of trustees that allow more focused governance of the school have been introduced. However, it is too early for these changes to have had a noticeable impact. There have been governor visits that have looked at boarding, but this has not been done with a specific focus.

There are several long-standing staff members at the school, and they support newer staff being inducted into the school. Communication between staff is good. Staff said that they are supported emotionally and physically by the leadership team. This ensures that their well-being is good and enables them to provide consistent boundaries and routines for students.

Staff communicate well to ensure that there is good understanding about what is happening in the school. However, there is not a formal opportunity for staff to have their performance reviewed with senior leaders, or the space to be able to reflect on the impact of their work.

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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:

- 20.1 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.
- 2.1 The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school and takes appropriate action where necessary.
- 7.6 All medication is stored safely and securely, and accurate records are kept of its administration.

Recommendations

- Staff should ensure that parents are made aware when students are sick.
- Senior leaders should ensure that they book training with local safeguarding professionals to ensure that there is a working knowledge regarding the role of the local authority designated officer.
- Staff should ensure that reports are written clearly and accurate records are kept.

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: SC014681

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Dr Toru Okano

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors

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