

Twyford School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Twyford is a preparatory school located in a rural setting a short distance from the city of Winchester. The school offers day places for pupils of both sexes aged from three to 13, and boarding places for pupils of both sexes aged from eight to 13 years of age. Boarding places at the school are available on a weekly or flexi basis. The schools' philosophy is based on Christian principles with pupils of differing faiths also being welcome. Services are held regularly within the school's chapel. The main school building is a Queen Anne house that has been adapted and extended over the years and which contains all of the boarding accommodation for boys and girls.

Summary

Boarding provision at the school is being extremely well managed, and provides a homely and caring environment where boarders are very happy and where they feel safe. Excellent staffing levels ensure the safe supervision of boarders and enable an extremely wide range of evening activities to be provided. Healthcare provision is good and pupils are suitably encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles. The boarding accommodation is of a very good standard and boarders have excellent access to a wide range of recreational facilities.

Communication across the school is excellent and provides for very effective monitoring of pupil welfare. Boarders enjoy very positive and mutually respectful relationships with the staff looking after them. They have numerous people they can talk to and have forums where their views and opinions are listened to. The school provides a safe and secure physical environment for boarders. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding, there is excellent provision for the management of risk, and established systems ensure effective monitoring of the school's overall operation.

The inspection was carried out on an announced basis and the school was inspected against all of the key national minimum standards for boarding schools. A sample of 39 boarders completed questionnaires prior to the inspection and a number were spoken to during the inspection.

There are two recommendations arising from the inspection, which are included in this report. One relates to the provision of non-prescription medication for boarders, and the other recommends that boarders are provided with their own lockable space.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were five recommendations arising from the school's previous inspection. Four of these have been satisfactorily addressed while one will remain as a recommendation of this report. Since the previous inspection, the school now provides parents and pupils with details of how to contact Ofsted in relation to any welfare complaint. The school has written procedures relating to recruitment, and there are now no concerns in relation to the use of closed circuit television within the main school building. In addition, systems have been established for obtaining the views of boarders about how the boarding provision operates.

The one recommendation not addressed relates to the systems in place for recording medication administered to boarders, and the information provided for parents in relation to non-prescribed medication used by the school. This shortfall was acknowledged by the school and is being actively addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Health care provision at the school is good. Two matrons who are qualified nurses provide medical cover during the school day while a resident matron who is experienced and trained in first aid is available at all other times, including at night. This ensures there is effective cover 24 hours a day for boarders. Established systems ensure health related information is obtained prior to a boarder starting at the school and all pupils have a medical conducted by the local doctor shortly after arrival. With weekly and flexi boarding only, boarders will remain registered with their own doctors and dentists. The only exception being overseas boarders, who register at the local surgery, with whom the school has a good working relationship. Any specific individual health needs are being well managed and the majority of boarding staff have completed training in 'emergency first aid in schools'. Written parental permission has been obtained for the administration of first aid, non-prescription medication, and medical treatment. Medication is being managed effectively with secure storage and records of administration being maintained. These however are not individual records and the school has not obtained medical or nursing advice on the provision of non prescription medicines to boarders.

The school has an excellent personal, social and health education programme which provides information and guidance on countering major risks to health, and on leading healthy lifestyles. The programme is delivered age appropriately and is supported by the involvement of external agencies for some topics.

The catering provision at the school is extremely good, with nutritious and well balanced meals of good quality being provided. Menu creation is informed by a dietician and meals are prepared on the premises using fresh produce as much as possible. There is choice provided at all mealtimes and special dietary needs are well catered for. The dining facilities are well suited to the purpose, staff are suitably trained, and the school was awarded an 'excellent' grade at the most recent environmental health inspection which was carried out during 2010. Boarders are extremely positive about the meals provided for them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school provides a safe and secure environment for boarders and they report feeling safe. There is a very high regard paid to safeguarding pupils at the school and robust systems in place which ensure they are suitably protected from any harm. Boarders say bullying is not a problem at the school and are confident that staff deal effectively with any incidents that do occur. Displays within the school and active participation in anti-bullying week help to educate pupils and to maintain a high awareness level of the importance of tackling bullying. Cyber bullying is suitably addressed within the school's anti-bullying policy and pupils, parents and staff are receiving excellent information and advice in relation to the subject. Safeguards are in place which provide for safe use of the internet and for rigorous monitoring of electronic communication.

Boarders benefit from excellent provision for ensuring they are protected from the risk of harm or abuse. Trained and experienced senior staff assume overall responsibility for safeguarding and the school has an extremely good working relationship with the local authority designated officer. All staff receive regular child protection training, including ancillary workers, and there is a high level of awareness amongst staff of child protection matters and the procedures to follow. Robust policies and procedures inform and support safe practice across the school and boarders report overwhelmingly that they feel safe and have a wide range of people they can talk to.

The behaviour of pupils seen throughout the inspection was exemplary. Those spoken with were relaxed and very open about boarding, all commenting extremely favourably about their experiences as a boarder. The boarding house provides a homely environment with lots of staff around and boarders getting on very well together. The head of boarding records and monitors any sanctions imposed, with these being at a very low level. Boarders enjoy very positive relationships with the staff looking after them and feel fairly treated. Boarders and their parents are provided with suitable information about how to make a complaint to the school and the very low level recorded was seen as a reflection of how the school deals effectively with any concerns at an early stage. The boarders feel confident in raising any issues with a variety of staff.

Boarders are suitably protected from the risk of fire. All aspects of fire safety are addressed in a rigorous manner with regular drills, tests and servicing ensuring the well-being of pupils and staff alike. There is an established and beneficial relationship with the local fire and rescue department, who have undertaken familiarisation exercises at the school. New boarders are walked through the fire evacuation procedures upon arriving at the school and those boarders spoken to confirm that practice drills are held regularly. The school has excellent arrangements for the security of the premises which help to ensure a safe and secure environment is provided for boarders. There is a key-pad system for access to all building entry points and a designated 'security officer' who ensures the school buildings are secure at night.

Suitable changing and bathing facilities provide boarders with very good privacy. Boarders reported that all staff are very respectful of their privacy especially at times of showering or changing. Shower and bathroom facilities have been refurbished since the previous inspection and were seen to be of a very high standard.

Boarders are protected by the rigorous application of recruitment procedures. Staff with responsibilities for the implementation or monitoring of recruitment have attended safer recruitment training and there is an acute awareness of the need to be vigilant in this area. Established systems ensure all visitors are checked and monitored while on the premises and there is no unsupervised access to boarders or their accommodation.

The school has excellent systems in place for managing risk which includes those risks associated with the environment and with all activities undertaken by boarders, both on and off site. A health and safety consultant carries out regular health and safety audits which includes reviewing written risk assessments and ensuring the school complies with current health and safety legislation. Risk assessments sampled included those for overseas skiing trips, and for the use of the school swimming pool.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There are established and effective systems which provide for outstanding individual support to pupils across the school. Boarders confirmed they have someone they can talk to if they need to, and this include tutors, school listeners, independent listeners, teachers, boarding staff, matrons, and gap students. The staff group at the school is well balanced in terms of gender and boarders have access to both male and female staff at all times. Observations during the inspection saw boarders communicating in a relaxed and friendly manner with staff, and enjoying mutually respectful relationships with them. School listeners are available to pupils during the school day and contact details of the independent listeners and child centred help lines are displayed within the boarding house. Excellent communication across the school ensures the effective monitoring of any welfare concerns relating to individual pupils and care is taken to share information on a need to know basis.

The school operates on Christian principles but welcomes pupils from other faiths and religions. Boarders spoken with confirmed being treated equally and being given the same opportunities to participate in all areas of the school life. School documentation demonstrates a clear commitment to equal opportunities and to tackling inappropriate discrimination of any form. There were no identifiable minority groups amongst the school population either being excluded or discriminated against. New boarders are allocated a more experienced boarder to act as their 'buddy' upon arrival and to help them to settle in. A newly arrived overseas boarder confirmed that they had been made to feel very welcome and fully supported upon arrival at the school. The school caters extremely well for pupils who have individual needs relating to health, diet, and those associated with their ability to learn.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There is a recognisable child-centred culture at the school within which boarders are considered an integral aspect, with their views and wishes being acknowledged and acted upon. They are encouraged and supported to contribute their views through the boarding committee and school council. These forums are open and interactive allowing boarders a formal arena to contribute their thoughts. The boarders reported their views and opinions are always listened to and it was clear that they also have many informal and formal opportunities to express their views. The school encourages boarders to show responsibility, and to value and respect others. These principles are clearly seen to be reciprocated by staff in their interactions with boarders.

Boarders are able to maintain contact with their families via telephones provided solely for their use, by e-mail, or by using mobile phones. Mobile phones are permitted but there are clear rules governing their use and they have to be handed in to staff during the school day and at night time. Telephone calls can be received and made in private and the contact details of an appropriate help line is displayed adjacent to the phone. With the school providing only weekly and flexi boarding at the moment, the great majority of boarders have regular contact with their families. However, provision is also made for any boarder from overseas to be able to 'Skype' their parents. The school maintains good communication links with parents. Regular contact can take place when parents either drop off or pick up their child, telephone calls and emails are used to communicate as necessary, and the school produces weekly electronic newsletters for parents.

New boarders are helped to settle into the school by an effective 'buddy' system and an array of information available to them. Boarders reported they are made to feel very welcome when they start boarding and this helps them settle in quickly. There is clear and concise information relating to boarding, available for parents to access on the school's website or through the prospectus and associated documents provided.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarders are provided with homely accommodation that is well organised and of a very good overall standard. All areas are kept immaculately clean, are centrally heated, well furnished and very well maintained. Dormitories have plenty of natural light, are all carpeted, and provide suitable protection and separation by age and gender. There is no disparity in the provision between dormitories; however boarders do not have a lockable space where they could keep personal possessions and valuables. Toilet and washing provision within the boarding house has been totally refurbished since the previous inspection. The facilities are of a very good standard, are sufficient in number and provide appropriate privacy. Staff accommodation within the boarding house is suitably separate but close by to boarders' dormitories.

Communal facilities within the boarding provision are extremely good and provide for a range of recreational activities. There is a large and well equipped games room, a very comfortable and spacious drawing room where boarders congregate for film nights or to watch television. There is also a communal kitchen where boarders can make snacks and drinks. In addition boarders have access to a wide range of school facilities during evenings. These include a sports hall, playing fields, an artificial pitch, swimming pool, IT suite, art room, and cooking facilities. The high staffing levels during boarding time enable staff on duty to provide an extensive range of activities and after school clubs.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school provides each individual pupil with a high standard of care and support in an environment where they are free to express their views and opinions. Individual needs linked to health and diet are very well catered for. There is equality of opportunity, pupils are actively encouraged to respect differences, and they learn to appreciate and celebrate other cultures and religions from around the world. Overseas trips provide opportunities for pupils to experience and learn about other cultures and during 2010 a multicultural week was held during which the Chinese New Year was celebrated. Pupils also helped to raise money for Children In Need, the Haiti earthquake disaster, and an orphanage in Nepal. School documentation shows a clear commitment to promoting equal opportunities, to promoting diversity and to tackling discrimination in any form.

The school is managed in a highly effective and coordinated manner with the welfare of all pupils assuming a high priority. Staffing arrangements are well structured with clear lines of accountability, and the organisation of boarding contributes extremely effectively to the welfare of boarders. The head of boarding provides clear and effective leadership and those staff involved in boarding are very well informed of their roles and responsibilities. Boarders are extremely well supervised at all times and they enjoy very positive and caring relationships with the staff looking after them.

Prospective parents and pupils are provided with detailed information about the ethos of the school and the principles which govern its operation on a daily basis. The school's website and prospectus provide a wealth of information which includes that specific to boarding, and boarders are provided with an informative handbook. Parents also receive electronic newsletters from the school every week.

There is excellent communication across the school, both via the school network and during the frequent informal and formal meetings which take place. There is excellent support provided for newly appointed staff with an induction that covers child protection, and the school is supportive of further training via the Boarding School's Association. The school's policy and procedures documents support and promote good practice in relation to welfare matters and are provided for staff in written form as well as being accessible on the school network.

Established systems are providing extremely effectively for the promotion and protection of boarders' welfare. The school's governing body are actively involved and provide rigorous overall monitoring in relation to the boarding provision. High quality risk management provides for safety across the school and for all activities undertaken by pupils, both on and off site. A specialist consultant provides for the overall monitoring of health and safety provision, and the school's meticulous record keeping ensures the effective monitoring of complaints, accidents, risk assessments, and any welfare concerns.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to

- secure and follow, qualified medical or nursing advice in a written protocol on the provision of non-prescription 'household' medicines to boarders. (NMS15.9)
- ensure each boarder has a suitably secure, accessible place to keep personal possessions and valuables (e.g. a lockable drawer, cupboard, locker, box or trunk). (NMS 20.3)