

Vinehall School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Angela Gunning
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Date of last inspection	22 March 2005

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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

Vinehall is a co-educational day and boarding school for children aged between 2 and 13. It is set in 47 acres in the Sussex countryside. Although the school is centred on a 1830's country house there are a wide range of modern facilities, such as purpose built theatre; an indoor Sports Hall, with an adjoining indoor heated swimming pool; a Millennium Building providing classrooms, computers, an Information Communication Technology (ICT) suite and a library. Vinehall School started as a country preparatory school in 1938 when the school opened with six local children. There are currently approximately 50 full time boarders and 56 flexi boarders. Boarding is very much at the heart of the school. Most boarders are local children, a few are from overseas or other parts of the country. The boarding accommodation is located in the main school building, with segregated boys and girls dormitories. Boarders are accommodated in dormitories of between 5 and 10 children in single or bunk beds. Two Houseparents and their two young children live on site in the boarding accommodation to provide a 'homely' and 'family' atmosphere to boarding at Vinehall School. Prospective parents and pupils are given a copy of the School's prospectus and they can find out information about the services and facilities at Vinehall School via the internet at www.vinehallschooll.com and can also email the school at office@vinehallschooll.co.uk.

Summary

This was a key inspection and included a two day visit to Vinehall School. This inspection looked at outcomes for the key National Minimum Standards for children and young people who are educated in Boarding Schools. This inspection found that Vinehall School provides an excellent standard of boarding provision to assist children in their educational, personal, social and emotional development. The school provides a very caring and nurturing environment that enables children to reach their potential.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Being Healthy: Medical records have been updated and all staff are made fully aware of the children's health and medication needs. A new Chef has recently started working in the school and the children are provided with healthy and varied meals. **Staying Safe:** An intranet based alert system has been introduced, allowing easier communication from children to staff to as part of the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures. As the children are generally very well behaved, the new House parents felt a need for this to be recognised and celebrated in the Boarding House. There is a new system of rewarding and encouraging good behaviour as well as discourage poor behaviour in the Boarding House. The school's complaints procedure is more accessible to the boarders should they wish to raise a major complaint about the boarding provision. The children's safety and privacy within the Boarding House is protected by various systems such as careful use of the visitors book and accompanied by staff, CRB checks on regular overnight guests of the House parents, intruder alarms and cctv. **Enjoying and achieving:** Evening and weekend activities have increased positive contribution: The Head of Boarding has devised a new "Advice to Guardians" sheet to assist with parental contact with the Boarding House. **Economic wellbeing:** New mattresses have been bought for the dormitories and this is now part of a rolling program of renewal. **Organisation:** The new House parents living in the

building has improved both the supervision of the children, and the sense of extended family. There is a positive, family-centred, caring environment.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The physical, psychological and emotional health needs of the children are well met at Vinehall School. The children's healthcare needs are clearly identified and there are good systems and liaison with various healthcare professionals to assist the School in meeting the individual healthcare needs of each child. The children confirmed that they feel cared for and commented that 'people are always looking out for you' and 'in the Boarding House there are kind Houseparents to look after you if you are home sick' and 'there is always someone to care for you'. The school has an effective medication policy and procedure and provide 24-hour onsite or on-call medical or first aid cover by School Nurses or Matron. Staff are made fully aware of the children's medical needs to ensure their medication needs are met. The children confirmed they are given help if they are unwell and commented that 'the matron or school nurse is always willing to help' and if you feel bad there is always someone helping you'. Healthy and varied meals are provided and children are given a balanced diet that meets their dietary needs and choices. The children are encouraged to be involved in food choices and planning menus. Mealtimes are relaxed, sociable occasions and cultural and religious dietary needs are catered for well. The children confirm that the standard of food is good; they are provided with a healthy diet and commented 'there is always fruit and veg when you want it' and 'the meals are great now with the new cook'. Some children commented that the supper provision could be better. A new chef started working in the School in September 2007 and has a good awareness of the children's dietary needs and choices and is consulting with them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Bullying is very rare at Vinehall School and there are good systems in place to ensure the school deals with it effectively. The children confirm that they have not been bullied and comment that 'nobody is really bullied at Vinehall School because we have such a strong community. But if someone is there is lots of support to get someone to stop bullying that person'. The children's safety and privacy within the Boarding House is protected by various systems such as careful use of the visitors book, cctv and regular health and safety checks. There are good child protection procedures in place to safeguard and protect the children. Staff receive training in child protection annually. The school has a clear complaints procedure which is made available to the children, their relatives and representatives. The children confirm they are aware of the complaints procedure and can talk to people if they are unhappy. The Boarding House behaviour management system is being developed by the new Houseparents. The children confirm that standards of acceptable behaviour are clearly known and generally they like the new system. As the Boarding Handbook is in the process of being revised the children are being consulted so that Boarders will be fully informed of the School's behaviour policy in the Boarding House. Records indicate that staff recruitment procedures, including gap students, is very comprehensive and thorough to safeguard the children and fit the right person for the job. The school has good health and safety policies and procedures. There is an up to date full fire risk assessment of the premises. Regular fire safety checks and risk assessments are carried out to ensure the safety of the young people and staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The individual and personal support given to each child when Boarding is a strength of Vinehall School. The children are given appropriate and individualised support. Staff demonstrate they know the children well and are aware of their individual needs. The children confirmed they are happy at Vinehall School and commented that 'Vinehall has a very happy boarding community and many people board because they want to rather than they have to'; 'I have been at Vinehall for 9 years now and I have enjoyed every year of my time here' and 'everyone is friendly and there's always someone to go to'. Vinehall School values diversity, recognises individuality and addresses discrimination. The school makes good arrangements to assist those children whose first language is not English. One child considers at 'Vinehall School everyone's happy and different and proud to be'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Listening, consulting with the children and welcoming initiative and ideas for school improvement is part of the ethos of Vinehall School. The children confirm they are able to communicate their views in various ways, such as school council meetings, dormitory leaders meetings, boarders' questionnaire, the food committee and food feedback sheets in the dining hall. Staff demonstrate that they value the views and opinions of the children. The new Houseparents are currently promoting the children's contributions to the Boarding House. Vinehall School provides support for boarders' family and parental contact, although provides limited landline telephones for the number of boarders. The school is looking at making more provision for these contacts to be made in private.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Vinehall School provides a good standard of accommodation for Boarders. The dormitories were seen to be clean, tidy and well maintained. Although, it was noted that two chairs in one of the boys dormitories were in need of repair. The children commented very positively about boarding at Vinehall School. They made comments such as 'its not just a house, it's a home'; 'it is the best thing ever-boarding'; 'the Houseparents are so thoughtful and make boarding the best experience of my life' and 'I love boarding, the Houseparents have made a great family atmosphere'

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The School's statement of boarding principles and practice is provided to parents, boarders and staff through the boarding handbooks. The boarding handbooks are in the process of being reviewed and updated by the new houseparents. The children are being involved in this process. Vinehall School has a good system of risk assessment and the Headteacher oversees these to ensure children are kept safe with risks minimised and yet allows for free play and healthy activities. Parents commented that 'the school offers a happy, wholesome and encouraging environment and my three children are very happy; 'the school is well run, children and are both happy and stimulated there' and 'the school is excellent at what it does and my children are very happy'. There are more than sufficient numbers of staff available for the supervision

of boarders, the activities they are involved in and the different age and gender groups. The children confirm they can find a member of staff when they need to. All new boarding staff, including gap students receive a thorough induction training. Staff are encouraged to be involved in training opportunities. The new Houseparents are in the process of developing training plans and a staff appraisal system for boarding staff.

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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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the two worn chairs in one of the boys dormitories are repaired or replaced.
NMS 40

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for boarding school

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders' health is promoted (NMS 6)
- safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records (NMS 7)
- boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary (NMS 15)
- boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill (NMS 16)
- boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal problems (NMS 17)
- boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals (NMS 25)
- boarders are suitably accommodated when ill (NMS 48)
- boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered (NMS 49).

Ofsted considers 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders are protected from bullying (NMS 2)
- boarders are protected from abuse (NMS 3)
- use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate (NMS 4)
- boarders' complaints are responded to appropriately (NMS 5)
- the operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school (NMS 22)
- boarders are protected from the risk of fire (NMS 26)
- the welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school (NMS 28)
- boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities (NMS 29)
- boarders' personal privacy is respected (NMS 37)
- there is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders (NMS 38)
- boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures; all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises are supervised (NMS 39)
- boarders have their own accommodation, which is secure from public intrusion (NMS 41)
- boarders are protected from safety hazards (NMS 47)

Ofsted considers 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders have access to a range and choice of activities (NMS 11)
- boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination (NMS 18)
- boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands (NMS 27)
- boarders have satisfactory provision to study (NMS 43)
- boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas (NMS 46)

Ofsted considers 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.

Annex A

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school (NMS 12)
- boarders receive personal support from staff (NMS 14)
- boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families (NMS 19)
- new boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in (NMS 21)
- boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school (NMS 30)
- there are sound relationships between staff and boarders (NMS 36)

Ofsted considers 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders' possessions and money are protected (NMS 20)
- boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation (NMS 40)
- boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation (NMS 42)
- boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities (NMS 44)
- boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day (NMS 45)
- boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school (NMS 50)

Ofsted considers 51 the key standard to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- a suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- there is clear leadership of boarding in the school (NMS 8)
- crises affecting boarders' welfare are managed effectively (NMS 9)
- the school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare (NMS 10)
- risk assessment and school record-keeping contribute to boarders' welfare (NMS 23)
- boarders are supervised adequately by staff (NMS 31)
- staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site (NMS 32)
- boarders are adequately supervised at night (NMS 33)
- boarders are looked after by staff which have specific boarding duties, and have received adequate induction and continued training (NMS 34)
- boarders are looked after by staff which follow clear boarding policies and practice (NMS 35)
- the welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 51)
- the welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

Ofsted considers 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.