

# Mowden Hall School

Inspection report for boarding school

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC042889
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 November 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Leonard Hird
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Address</b>	Mowden Hall (Newton) School Trust Ltd Newton STOCKSFIELD Northumberland NE43 7TP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01661 842147
<b>Email</b>	info@mowdenhall.co.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Principal, Cothill Educational Trust
<b>Head / Principal</b>	
<b>Nominated person</b>	Ben Beardmore-Gray. Headmaster
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	9 October 2006

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

## 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**

Mowden Hall School is a well established preparatory school, set in its own large grounds and offering full boarding facilities for up to 120 boys and girls, between the ages of eight years old and 13 years old. The school is part of the Cothill Educational Trust and is located near the small Northumbrian town of Corbridge. The separate boarding provision for boys and girls is to be found in the main school building. All pupils in the fourth year, experience boarding at a chateau in France, also owned by the Cothill Educational Trust.

### **Summary**

This was a key announced inspection, to assess Mowden Hall School against the key National Minimum Standards (NMS) for boarding schools and to see if recommendations made at the last inspection had been addressed. The school is child-centred, well managed and provides a safe and caring environment for the boarding pupils to live in. Boarding pupils and parents indicate that they feel the school is providing high levels of opportunities for the pupils to participate in a wide range of activities, in pleasant surroundings and accommodation. The school has addressed all of the recommendations made at the last inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Mowden Hall school has developed and is continuing to develop all of its policies and procedures, relating to training, guidance and information given to staff, boarding pupils and parents. Training and the awareness of staff to safeguarding issues, has significantly improved in the area of safeguarding training for all of the school's staff with the local authorities safeguarding team. There are robust pre-employment checks made on all employees or volunteers working at the school.

The environmental standards found in the boarding houses have significantly improved since the last inspection and this refurbishment and re-decoration programme is being further developed over the next two years.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Boarding pupils are given consistent advice and high levels of support in health and personal care issues. This advice and support is being given in a very positive and constructive manner, by the boarding house and teaching staff.

The health and medication needs of boarding pupils are well monitored, administered and recorded by the school's registered nurse and boarding house staff.

Boarding pupils take all of their main meals in an ordered and friendly manner in the dining hall. There are a number of different types of food, including a vegetarian choice available from the menu. The meals are well prepared, cooked and healthy in content. All of the meals prepared at the school, take full account of any specialist dietary needs of individual boarding pupils. Boarders said that the meals at the school are always enjoyable, with an odd exception at

supertime. Boarders are receiving positive guidance on how to live a healthy lifestyle at the school.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The school has a readily available and up to date policy and procedure in place, for countering bullying. Information is prominently and well displayed for boarders throughout the school, on how to deal with bullying. There is an easy to understand pamphlet available for each boarder, containing information on how to counter bullying and who to contact in the school, if they wanted to discuss any issue surrounding bullying.

The school has an 'Independent Listener' who is easily contactable by boarders, either by telephone or in person, if they wish to speak to somebody in confidence, but who is not a member of staff.

Boarders confirmed that they were aware of the school's countering bullying policy, as well as to whom they could talk to, including the 'Independent Listener' about any bullying, complaints or safeguarding issues.

All staff employed at the school prior to their employment, have to undergo robust written and verbal reference checks, an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check, as well as a formal interview. All of this personnel information is kept securely and in line with the Data Protection Act at the school.

The school has a comprehensive safeguarding policy and procedure in place. There is full involvement with the local authority, in the training of all staff working at the school in safeguarding and child protection procedures.

There are two experienced and appropriately trained senior members of staff, who are the school's designated safeguarding officers. All staff are receiving regular, recorded safeguarding training and they are in receipt of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures contained in the staff hand book.

The school's comprehensive complaints policy and procedure is readily available for use by parents and boarders. The boarding pupils are also provided with an easy to read complaints pamphlet, that explains how to complain if they need to. The school is maintaining appropriate records of any complaints made either by boarding pupils or parents.

Regular recorded fire, security and safety checks are undertaken in the boarding house and these checks are in line with the school's health and safety policies and procedures, national guidance and regulations.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Boarding house staff work very closely with educational and support staff, to ensure that all of the boarding pupils are given the help and support that they require, to manage their lives both in and out of school time. The school offers a wide range of activities for boarding pupils to take part in, such as the school choir, competitive sports, outdoor pursuits and visits to local venues and attractions, as well as the opportunity to have time for themselves. This wide range

of planned and unplanned risk assessed activities is well supported by boarding pupils, the local community and staff. The school ensures that full account is taken of the differing needs, abilities and backgrounds of the boarding pupils, so that no individual pupil is disadvantaged.

The school practices a clear and supportive policy of equal opportunities for all of the pupils attending the school and the school follows their policies and procedures, in relation to equal opportunities.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Boarding pupils are actively encouraged to take part in the day to day running of the boarding house and they can influence decisions made within the school, by the pupil's house committee. Both the Matrons and the Headmaster's wife have an open door policy for boarders to speak to them about any subject at any time.

There are telephones readily available in the school for boarders to keep in contact with their family and friends. Boarders can also make use of either email or the more traditional methods of letter writing, to keep in contact with their friends and family. There are regular games and events and parents are positively encouraged by the school, to keep in contact with their children.

Great care and attention is given to the support of boarding pupils, when they first come into the boarding house. The Matrons ensure that there is a friendly welcome and careful eye is kept upon new boarders, so that homesickness does not become a problem.

Boarders confirmed that they could influence important decisions made in the house, by their involvement in the house committee and being able to speak to boarding house staff.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Boarding pupils are able to keep small valuables safely and securely in a lockable box within their bedroom furniture and if necessary, any larger valuable possessions can be stored securely in their own tuck boxes located elsewhere in the boarding house.

The separate boarding areas for boys and girls are generally in good decorative order, with suitable furniture and fittings. The living and sleeping areas provide a pleasant and comfortable environment for the boarding pupils to live in and in many cases, these living areas have been personalised by the individual boarding pupils by the use of posters, duvet covers and family photographs. The ongoing refurbishment and re-decoration work within the boarding house, has been completed to a high standard and boarding pupils are highly complimentary of the work completed so far and they are looking forward to its completion, at the end of the school year. As well as the ongoing refurbishment and re-decoration programme, which is occurring at the school, all other minor repairs and re-decoration work required in the boarding house area is carried out quickly and efficiently, by the school's maintenance team.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The school provides a well written and easy to understand statement of its principles and practices for parents, boarders and staff. There is also a school website, where additional information about the school can be found. Each member of staff is also provided with a comprehensive and up to date staff handbook, that gives clear guidance to staff, on the policies and procedures to be used within the school. The school has well monitored and good recording systems in place, along with comprehensive and up to date risk assessments, to ensure the health and safety of the boarding pupils. Boarding pupils confirmed that there are regular fire drills, at different times throughout the term and they know how to react, in case of a fire in the boarding house. There is a dedicated team of experienced boarding house staff, who ensure that the boarding house is run efficiently and well managed. Boarding pupils confirmed that they felt well cared for by this friendly team of Matrons, nursing, teaching and ancillary staff.

Staffing levels both during the day and at night, are meeting the current needs and numbers of boarders residing at the school. The organisation, oversight and management of the boarding house is creating a safe and very supportive atmosphere for boarding pupils to live in.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good at the school. The new senior management team of the Headmaster, the recently appointed deputy Headmaster and the Headmaster's wife are providing strong leadership, effective oversight and management for the boarding house.

## 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
----------	--------	----------

### Recommendations

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

- ensure all boarding house staff who administer medication undertake a training course in the safe handling and administration of medication (NMS 15)
- ensure that the policies and procedures in relation to behaviour, discipline, punishments, rewards and restraints are reviewed (NMS 4)
- ensure that the renovation and refurbishment of the boarding house area is completed as per the timescales as detailed in the current development plan for the school (NMS 40).