

Eton College

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Tola Akinde-Hummel
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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

Eton College is a full boarding school for boys aged 13- 18 years. It provides permanent boarding accommodation in 25 houses to 1,308 boys. All boarders have single rooms. The houses are individual in character and are managed by a housemaster, dame, a team of deputies and assistants and a team of ancillary staff. The college aims include; promoting the best habits of independent thought and learning in the pursuit of excellence and supporting pastoral care that nurtures physical health, emotional maturity and spiritual richness.

Summary

This full inspection looked at all the key national minimum standards and a number of additional standards. A large number of boarders and staff including housemasters, masters, dames, personnel, catering and ancillary staff participated in the inspection.

Boarders have good access to medical care and information. They are able to eat nutritious, regular meals and take exercise to maintain optimum health.

Safeguarding mechanisms in the school are strong. Boarders can take issues to any number of people, confident that these will be addressed. The attitude and behaviour of boarders suggests that they are content in the college. Rewards and sanctions are reasonable.

Boarders have plenty of opportunities to participate in activities that they enjoy. Team and individual effort is encouraged. There is a positive relationship with peers and staff; boys show a loyalty to their house.

The school premises meet the needs of boarders. However, there is a lack of suitable safeguards on some windows.

The senior management team are effective in maintaining order and promoting improvement of pastoral care. Monitoring of certain areas of training has lapsed. The various committees work together to cover all aspects of boarding. One parent commented, the school, 'takes boys in their teenage years and delivers happy well educated and rounded individuals at the end.'

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The college was asked to amend information in the child protection procedure. This was completed. It is now clear that concerns are always reported to the local children's services referral and assessment team.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders benefit from a high standard of health education and medical attention. Boarders' health needs are promoted through a variety of means including the personal, social and health education programme. An extensive, interesting plan is put together for small groups of boys. Older boarders have a less formalised programme which is equally relevant. The college deals

with the use of alcohol, smoking and illegal substances in a clear way and directly relates this to the law. Boarders, their parents and staff know how the college will respond should any concerns arise.

Boarders can be confident that their health records are securely stored. These records contain pertinent health information and emergency contacts. The way in which records are kept is consistent in all houses.

Boarders enjoy the services of a 24 hour medical team in the sanatorium. The sanatorium staff have a vast amount of clinical experience. Boarders also have the services of physiotherapists and counsellors as required. All boarders have a medical on arrival to the college and relevant medical information is provided prior to starting at Eton. The medical team are vigilant in their primary care of boarders and ensure follow up is provided where necessary. House staff are able to call upon the medical team for advice. Detailed care plans are in place for some boarders and comprehensive risk assessments are completed for boarders who administer their own medication or have a life threatening allergy. In one house, whilst staff were aware of the risk to health, did not sufficiently monitor foods brought into the house that is a serious threat to a boarders well being.

The medical team supports boarders with ongoing health issues. Medical staff have been instrumental in managing serious illnesses and monitoring complex health conditions. Clear written guidance is prepared for house staff annually. The protocol for medication and homely remedies is written by doctors, kept in all houses and followed. The senior nursing sister completes annual reviews of medication and records stored in the houses. They ensure compliance with procedures and check that confidentiality is maintained. The college has a medical committee which meets each half to look at practice and discuss any improvements.

The sanatorium has 16 beds in which to monitor and treat ill boarders. This is well equipped and comfortable. The school managed the recent outbreak of swine flu efficiently. House staff received training in administering Tamiflu. Procedures for infectious diseases are in place and staff are familiar with these. One parent stated, 'care in the sanatorium is outstanding.' a senior boy added, 'the care you get in the medical centre is really good.'

Boys are provided with a nutritious and varied diet to meet their individual needs.. Boarders had differing views on the quality and choice of meals. However most boarders enjoy breakfast and state that lunches and suppers vary. The main catering service has emergency stores provisions should there be a situation where boarders and staff are unable to leave the college. All catering staff along with the sanatorium and house staff manage boarders with special dietary needs. One parent wrote, 'A dietary regime has been put in place for my son by house catering staff, done anonymously, without fuss and embarrassment.' Boarders are able to access drinking water throughout the houses in addition to the provision at their main meals.

In one house, staff are aware of the allergy risk to boarders health. Relevant staff are trained in emergency medical treatment in this case; however staff did not sufficiently monitor foods brought into the house by boarders that presented a serious threat to boarders well being.

Boarders know that the laundry provision in the college caters for their needs. Clean bedding and clothing are delivered on a weekly basis.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are aware of the attitude the college has towards bullying. They understand that this will not be tolerated and will be dealt with swiftly. Procedures for dealing with bullying are robust and well known to staff, parents and boarders. Staff are alert to any behaviour that suggests a boarder is being singled out, teased or criticised whether in the house, during lessons or on the sports field. Boys know that they can seek support if they are feeling ostracised or victimised. Boarders reported that bullying is not an issue at Eton.

Eton takes the responsibility for protecting children seriously. The lower master is the designated child protection officer. The college has a clear procedure for dealing with all child protection matters and allegations. All staff understand their duty to report matters of concern immediately. Training is delivered annually. One external partner stated, 'management have commissioned safeguarding/ child protection training from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children's Board.' Prefects are briefed on child protection and bullying. The Lower master has a tremendous amount of knowledge and is thorough in all issues relating to child protection. Meticulous records are kept of all allegations and concerns and these are password protected ensuring information remains confidential.

Boarders understand what kind of behaviour is expected of them during their time at Eton. Rules on behaviour and conduct are set out. Methods of behaviour management are measured and consistent. The lower master and the headmaster manage discipline. Electronic records assist to monitor offences and punishments; this ensures any emerging patterns are quickly identified and addressed. Boarders are positively encouraged through the system of good notes to improve behaviour and academic attainment. Boarders reported 'discipline is not punitive, discipline is minimal and fair.' One parent commented, 'discipline is well balanced.'

Boarders and parents have access to housemasters, the headmaster and the lower master should they wish to make a complaint. The process is detailed in their handbooks. The college does not have a significant number of complaints. All informal and formal complaints made are responded to within agreed timescales.

Prefects are carefully chosen by the masters and in some cases boarders. They are selected for their maturity, fairness and ability to set a good example. Prefects are trained and supported during their service. They are concerned with the welfare of other boarders and undertake other responsibilities within the college. Prefects are proud of their position and carry out their duties conscientiously.

Boarders can be assured that sufficient measures are taken to minimise the risk of fire. All boarding houses have fire risk assessments. Boarding houses carry out fire drills each term. These are recorded with evacuation dates and times. The houses have fire safety equipment and fire retardant furnishings. Any fire alarms and smoke detectors set off are monitored through the central security system where they are responded to. All boarders and house staff are familiar with fire evacuation procedures.

The college undertakes risk assessments for all high risk activities. These include outdoor games, water sports, the combined cadet force and outings and activities at home and abroad. All possible risks are identified with actions recorded to reduce risk. All activities are properly

supervised and have instructors with relevant qualifications. On sports match days the school provides external medical support on the fields. The director of coaching oversees the physical welfare of boarders during training and competition.

The health and safety committee meets twice a term to manage health and safety issues. The recent appointment of two health and safety advisors recognises the magnitude of the job and the need to improve some monitoring. Parents stated 'there are high standards of health and safety. The school is well organised and efficient'

Boarders report that their privacy is always respected by staff and other boarders in the houses.

Eton has a good system in place for assessing the suitability of potential employees. Staff and contractors are subject to rigorous recruitment checks prior to access or employment in the college. All staff have Criminal Records Bureau checks.

Unsupervised access to the boarding accommodation is prevented by good security and effective monitoring of visitors. In addition, all houses operate a key pad system, changed regularly and known only to those living in the house.

Risks to health and safety are regularly addressed by the college and to the boarders. All houses have up to date health and safety risk assessments. Housemasters appraisals address this subject. Some windows in boarding houses do not have suitable protection to minimise the risk of accidents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders enjoy a wide range of activities at Eton. A large number of societies are available for boys to join. They are able to pursue their interest in the arts and participate in indoor and outdoor sports activities. Boarders say they have sufficient time for rest and relaxation.

The use of laptops is monitored by house staff. Consequences of inappropriate use are known to boarders. In addition, effective safeguarding systems exist to minimise the risk of access to inappropriate material on the internet.

Excellent support is in place for any boarder who needs personal guidance and support. House notice boards give contact details of organisations offering support. Boarders have a large selection of people within the college they can talk to. Boarders know who the school counsellor is and how to contact him. Staff make clear to boarders the limits of confidentiality.

Boarders and staff report that difference is valued at Eton College. School policies refer to equality of opportunity and the mechanisms the college will use to deal with any incident of discrimination. Boarders do not report being discriminated against or bullied for being different.

Eton College provides the opportunity for boarders to participate in the life of the school. Boarders reported that they can choose how much or how little they engage in extra activities. Housemasters ensure boarders are able to manage their time effectively and sensibly maximise their experience at the college.

Boarders have good facilities to study. All bedrooms have a desk, lamp, chair and personal computer. Some houses also have a communal study area with computers. Boarders are also

able to use other study facilities around the college if they wish to. Study time is factored into the day and boarders are expected to use this.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders have the opportunity to express their opinions about the boarding provision in a variety of ways. Formal opportunities include the block forums and surveys. Informal methods include speaking to the housemaster and his team. Feature films on a Saturday evening have come about as a result of listening to boarders.

Private contact with family members by boarders is maintained through a variety of methods. Boarders have access to email, telephones and letters. Boarders contact with their families is not restricted. Where feasible boarders are able to meet their parents for lunch during the weekend if they choose to.

The college is effective in helping new boarders settle in. The induction is undertaken over a long period of time. Boarders and their parents are able to meet new and established families. This is done informally at a barbeque or lunch organised by the housemaster and his team and again during an evening meal. This facilitates communication between parents. Prior to moving in, new boarders are taken on a day trip with the headmaster and the lower master in attendance. Visits have included trips to Thorpe Park and Chessington World of Adventure. All parents and boarders receive a welcome pack and handbook which explains life in the college. House staff are aware of the difficulties boarders may encounter being away from home. One parent stated, 'when our son first arrived, both the dame and the housemaster visited him separately every evening until they were sure he was settled.'

Positive relationships exist between staff and boarders. The relationships between staff and boarders is based on mutual respect. Staff recognise the unique situation boarders are in and promote an environment of tolerance and understanding. Staff ensure that individual personalities are allowed to develop and all boarders are treated fairly.

Boarders are able to use local facilities outside the college. Restrictions to any facilities are well known to boarders. The purchase of newspapers, toiletries and snacks is easily and safely available.

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Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarders do not routinely use lockable storage. Boarders and their parents are advised that lockable storage is required. This is available in some but not all rooms. Boarders choose not to use lockable storage as they believe relationships are built on trust. Boarders report that there are very few thefts in the college.

Boarding accommodation at the college is varied. This is due to the refurbishment programme and the way in which houses plan and spend their individual budgets.. All houses have suitable living and sleeping accommodation. Some houses are in need of replacement furniture. All houses have sufficient toilet and washing facilities and boarders state the accommodation meets their needs. Houses are well maintained with the assistance of ancillary staff. Major works are undertaken by the building works department and specialist contractors.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Boarders cultural and religious needs are taken into account and inclusive practice underpins the pastoral care provided. Boarders are happy with food preferences on offer and individual different dietary needs are well catered for. Staff responsible for providing pastoral care demonstrate a high awareness of the expectations and pressures that may be placed on boarders and of the importance of promoting a healthy work life balance for boarders. Staff promote equality through ensuring boarders are respected and valued as individuals and through the accessibility of high quality information. Excellent support systems exist and a comprehensive range of accessible policies covering equal opportunities, promoting diversity and non discriminatory practice is in place.

The leadership of boarding in the college is outstanding. Many areas of boarding practice have been streamlined to promote improvement in practice. This has not been to the detriment of the individual characteristics of boarding houses and the housemasters who manage them. All practices focus on the health, safety and welfare of boarders ensuring their needs are met in a safe and secure environment. Parents said; 'the pastoral care is excellent and close attention is paid to every boy's well being due to the excellent team work and collaboration between the dame and the housemaster... Staff create a cohesive family atmosphere.' The college have introduced a session for parents in adolescent development, to look at the complicated transition boys' experience. Follow up is provided in groups over dinner by housemasters.

The introduction of the pastoral committee gives a broader pastoral vision which looks at where changes need to be made. All staff involved in boarding have the opportunity to share their ideas to enhance the quality of the provision and the experience boarders have whilst living there.

Detailed contingency plans are in place throughout the college should there be a crisis affecting boarders welfare. Plans are prepared in through various committees in the college and in consultation with relevant outside agencies.

The organisation of boarding is well planned and monitored to ensure facilities in all houses meet the needs of boarders. A rolling programme of refurbishment and regular maintenance prevents major differences between houses.

All accidents, incidents, complaints punishments and risk assessments are monitored to quickly identify any emerging trends. The senior management team meet regularly to decide what course of action is required.

Boarders are well supervised by staff during the day and in the evening. Deputies and assistants support the work of the housemaster making cover easy to arranged where there is sickness or absence. This is also the case for dames.

Training is fairly well organised for boarding house staff although there are gaps such as fire training and manual handling training and some training for staff has lapsed such as first aid. There are arrangements in place for reviewing the performance of boarding staff.

All boarding staff understand their duties within the boarding house. Handbooks specific to their roles and responsibilities are provided. Dames cascade pertinent information to ancillary staff. The operation of the boarding houses suggests a good understanding of the part individuals have to play. One dame added, 'Eton is an amazingly well oiled machine.'

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 staff follow the school policy on countering risks to health in relation to severe allergies. (NMS 6)
- ensure windows accessible to boarders above the ground floor and presenting a risk to safety are fitted with suitable restrictors or alternative safety measures. (NMS 47)
- consider further training opportunities for staff commensurate with their role. (NMS 34)