

Scarborough College

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Michael McCleave / Helen Walker
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Address	Scarborough College Filey Road SCARBOROUGH North Yorkshire YO11 3BA
Telephone number	01723 360620
Email	
Registered person	Jonathan Lee
Head / Principal	Jonathan Lee
Nominated person	
Date of last inspection	23 January 2006

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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

The college is a co-educational day school with boarding facilities. There are three boarding houses located within a short distance from the main college site. All boarding accommodation is well maintained and comfortably furnished. Each house provides boarders with single or shared rooms, a common room, kitchen and showering and bathing facilities. House staff live in each boarding house to ensure that the care needs of boarders are met. All main meals are taken at the college although there are good facilities in each house for snacks to be prepared.

Summary

There has been a restructuring of the management at the school and this has brought about significant changes.

The good quality of the boarding experience is a strong feature of this school and staff are confident in their ability to safeguard the welfare of boarders. The management of the boarding houses ensures that staff are clear about their duties and this is reflected in the positive approach taken by staff.

Boarders enjoy living in their houses where strong friendships have blossomed. There is a strong sense of communal living and a respect for different cultures.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the head teacher was recommended to review a number of areas relating to boarding. These included the appointment of a head of boarding, a review of prefects induction, building maintenance, improving privacy in some showers areas, the provision of privacy hoods over the pay phones and extending the facilities in the medical room. The head teacher has taken appropriate steps to comply with these of the recommendations. The pay phones in the houses are rarely used due to the popularity of personal mobile phones. The boarding houses have quiet areas where private calls can be made.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The medical centre is managed by a full time qualified nurse. There are arrangements in place for a private agency to provide nursing staff if the school nurse is absent. However, this system is not reliable if the agency cannot fulfil the contract. Nurse cover is currently under review and plans for an arrangement with the local health clinic are being developed. Where required, specialist medical assistance is provided by the school doctor. All boarders have access to a dentist and optical services. Boarders are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and they are able to take advantage of the extensive sports facilities at the school. Boarding staff are aware of their responsibilities to monitor the health and well-being of the boarders. Training has been provided for house staff where specific medical treatment is required for individual boarders. A policy on substance and drug abuse, however, is not currently available to boarding staff. Health records in boarding houses are well maintained providing clear information about household remedies that have been administered. The medicine stock control in the medical

centre, was not available due to the absence of the nurse. The head of boarding confirmed that the nurse maintained a good medicines administration system including stock control.

The boarders enjoy good quality meals with a strong emphasis on healthy nutrition. They are encouraged by staff to lead a healthy lifestyle. Fruit is available at each meal time in the school refectory and in boarding houses. Any special diets relating to health, religious or cultural needs are met. Meals that represent different cultures at the school are provided to encourage integration and understanding of these diverse groups. This promotes equality and diversity. The food committee meets regularly with the catering manager to discuss any aspect of food and changes to the menu. This ensures that boarders can influence choices and preferences regarding meals. Meal times are enjoyed as social occasions when friends have the opportunity to meet informally.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Boarding staff are confident that bullying is not a major feature at the school, although they are alert to their responsibilities to manage any incident should this arise. The boarders demonstrate a caring attitude towards each other and bullying is rare. As pointed out by some of the boarders spoken to, 'this is a happy school' and 'if we noticed anyone being bullied, we would have a word with the bully and let them know it has to stop, or, we would take it further'. The consensus view among boarders is that being a small community, they would quickly know if anyone was subject to bullying and would report this to staff.

Boarding staff have a sound understanding of safeguarding and they are aware of the process to follow in reporting any allegations or suspicions of abuse. The head of boarding is responsible for coordinating any child protection concerns and has completed the local authority child protection on-line training course. Boarding as well as ancillary staff, are also required to complete this training. This is good practice and demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding. Information about external agencies is available in the boarder's welcome handbook.

Boarders are subject to sanctions for any breach of school rules and they feel that these are fair and not onerous. Prefects assist house staff to maintain discipline, but they have no powers to impose any punishments or sanctions.

Health and safety in boarding accommodation is good. Risk assessments are clear and detailed to ensure that boarders are safe within the school and during external visits. Fire safety equipment in all boarding houses have up-to-date checks confirming that these are in working order. The safety of boarders is given a high priority and regular fire evacuation drills are carried out each term. This ensures that everyone is familiar with the actions to take in the event of a fire. These measures promote the safety of boarders.

Boarders are able to have private time alone and staff are aware of their responsibilities to respect their privacy when entering bedrooms. The boarding houses are all well maintained providing boarders with a safe living environment. There are good quality security locks to ensure the safety of the boarders from unauthorised access by members of the public.

All staff appointed to the school are subject to appropriate checks before they can take up their post. Some recruitment records for past appointments did not have all the appropriate

documents in place. The most recent staff appointments comply with national standards and good safeguarding practice. The business manager is currently reviewing the recruitment and selection procedures. It is planned to make the system more efficient by streamlining all human resources tasks into one centralised operation. The current system of recruiting staff is carried out by two separate offices.

All visitors to the school are monitored whilst they remain on site. The safety of boarders is enhanced by the school only using selected contractors who have had all their employees cleared by the criminal records bureau. These measures promote the safety of boarders.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Support for boarders is very good. Boarders are aware that they can take a welfare or personal problem to any member of staff and are confident that any concerns would be listened to sympathetically. Information is available in the boarder's handbook listing external agencies who can also be contacted. House staff are available out of school time to be on hand to meet with any boarder who needed to talk about an issue or concern. The learning support unit offers extra support for those boarders who experience some difficulty in communicating.

There is a positive culture at the school which encourages respect for those who are from a different cultural background. Boarders are encouraged to follow their own religion, even though the school is non denominational. The wide range of activities available encourages team work and active participation together. This helps to promote integration at the school. Boarders said 'it's like a family being at this school'. There is a strong emphasis on community and integration at this school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Boarders are confident that they can influence life at the school. There is an active food committee and boarding council. Both these bodies enable boarders to express common concerns about boarding issues or food. There have been some positive changes brought about by these consultative bodies. In addition boarders speak to house staff on a daily basis and can raise issues about their particular boarding house. Boarders are confident that they can discuss issues with the head teacher and head of boarding. House meetings provide the boarders with the opportunity to discuss any aspects of boarding as a group with the house staff.

The boarders are encouraged to maintain contact with their families. They can use school computers for emails, and pay telephones are located in each house. Most boarders make use of their personal mobile phones. There are rooms available where calls can be made in private.

Induction for new boarders is organised by the house staff to introduce boarders to their respective houses, and to learn about the various aspects of boarding life. Handbooks are given to all new boarders which provides useful information for them. Boarders comments included, 'I felt very unsettled when I first came to the school but the other boarders and house staff made me feel very comfortable and they were easy to talk to'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The quality of boarding accommodation is good and the houses are well maintained. There are good quality furnishings in boarding houses and boarders enjoy life in their respective houses. Bedrooms are single or shared and each boarder has a desk and a secure locker to keep personal items. There are access to showers/bathing facilities and these are located close to the bedrooms. Lounges are comfortably furnished and these provide boarders with a place to relax and socialise after school time. Kitchens well equipped and clean. Each of the boarding houses are maintained to a high level of cleanliness by the house keeping staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There is a positive commitment towards ensuring that equality and diversity is promoted. The ethos of the school is to encourage respect for each other and cultural differences are celebrated. This is particularly evident in the boarding houses where a number of boarders are from different cultural backgrounds. The meals provided often reflect cultural heritage. During particular celebratory events such as Chinese New Year the catering staff will prepare a special Chinese meal for all the boarders. Culturally themed meals have proved popular. To assist integration the school provides extra tuition for those boarders who experience difficulty with English. In addition support is available for those who may have some learning difficulty through the learning support unit. Boarders who are from overseas feel welcome at this school.

The school handbook contains a statement of the ethos and principles of the school, and this is given to all staff and parents. Policies and practice procedures are located in the handbook. Some policies are currently being updated by the head of boarding.

The management and organisation of boarding houses is good. Each house ensures that boarders are always supervised during evenings and weekends. This promotes their safety and care. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient for the safe supervision of boarders. The safety of boarders is promoted through the risk assessments that are maintained at the school. These are detailed and clearly indicate the strategies required to reduce risks when on site, or away on school organised trips. Each boarding house keeps records on each boarder. These are well maintained and provide staff with relevant information thereby enabling them to provide individual care as required.

The induction programme for new boarding staff includes child protection and first aid training to ensure that they are competent in their duties to safeguard boarders. The school handbook contains the policies and procedures to inform boarding staff of their responsibilities. The school policy for the training of boarding staff is through shadowing more experienced colleagues in houses. Although some staff have completed external training, direct learning on duty is the preferred training method at the school. An appraisal process is being introduced for boarding staff.

The management and organisation of boarding houses is good and supports boarders to enjoy life at the school.

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 a written record is maintained of stock control of prescribed medication (NMS 15.12)
- ensure that all staff with boarding duties are provided with up to date written guidance on the school's policies and practice. (NMS 35.1)