

Dauntsey's School

Inspection report for Boarding School

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Inspector	Wendy Anderson
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Setting address	Dauntsey School, High Street, West Lavington, DEVIZES, Wiltshire, SN10 4HE
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Registered person	Dauntsey's School
Head/Principal	Stewart Roberts
Nominated person	Stewart Roberts
Date of last inspection	11/03/2008

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 school is situated within easy travelling distance of several major towns and set in attractive countryside. The school was founded in 1542 continues to be generously supported by the Mercers' Company. The school's prospectus states that the school encourages all pupils 'to make the most of his or her talents and interests in a lively and caring environment and realise their full potential morally, spiritually, culturally and academically.' The school is a co-educational school offering boarding provisions in five houses. The Manor House is situated off the main school campus and is for younger boarders of either sex, aged 11 to 14. The remaining boarding houses are for older pupils aged 14 to 18 and are separated by gender.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an announced key inspection which assessed all the key national minimum standards in all the Every Child Matters outcome areas. The school provides boarders with an outstanding standard of care supported by a very experienced staff team. Consultation with the young people is one of the main strengths of the school coupled with sound relationship with staff based on mutual respect and respect for individual values and talents. Young people are provided with a safe, nurturing environment in which to grow. This is supported by a robust system of recording systems which are monitored and reviewed. Young people's behaviour is excellent and they are a credit to themselves and the school.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the school has built a new boarding house in which every bedroom has en suite facilities. This provides boarders with outstanding accommodation. They also continue to refurbish and develop the existing boarding accommodation. Other developments have included the introduction of electronic hold backs, linked to the fire alarm system, for fire doors thus removing the need to wedge them open. There has been extensive development of the car parking space on the site. The school continues to review and develop its practice, policies, procedures and guidance for staff so as to provide the young people in their care with a quality service.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The school has a purpose-built medical centre which houses exceptional facilities for medical care, including ample provision for sick boarders. A nurse is on duty 24 hours a day and a GP visits twice a week. Boarders said that they felt they were very well looked after by the staff in the medical centre and the medical staff are warm, caring and always available. Boarders can also be seen in the GP surgery and are accompanied to hospital and other healthcare appointments as appropriate. All medicines are appropriately stored, administered and comprehensive records are kept. There is a robust system for older boarders to administer their own medication. Parental consents are in place for all boarders regarding the administration of medicines and first aid treatment. Information on boarders' health care needs is shared sensitively on a need to know basis. This includes any information on allergies. Where a boarder has a specific health issues a detailed health care plan is formulated. This is frequently reviewed and updated as required.

The school has an excellent personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme which includes input from visiting speakers. This includes all the required topics and is also responsive to world events. The medical centre staff and councillors are involved in this programme. Boarders said they thought this programme was very good.

The food at the school is of a good standard and there is a wide choice available. Each house has a food representative and the food committee meets termly and is attended by the catering manager. This provides boarders with a forum for their views and suggestions on catering. Boarders told the inspectors that this system works well and changes had been implemented as a result of these meetings. Catering staff receive the required training and the catering manager maintains the required records.

Boarders told the inspectors that the laundry service at the school was good. They reported that there was very little loss or damage. There is also laundry facilities in the boarding houses.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school has a robust anti-bullying policy, including cyber bullying. Staff are proactive in reducing the incidents of bullying at the school. Information about this is available to boarders and parents and guardians. The issue of bullying also forms part of the school PSHE programme. Boarders said that bullying is not an issue at the school. Both the school prefects and the pupil listening service receive comprehensive guidance on dealing with bullying and safeguarding issues. The school has excellent safeguarding policies and procedures, which all staff are required to sign up to. This incorporates the Amateur Swimming Pool Association's

safeguarding policies and procedures. All staff receive training on safeguarding issues at appropriate levels which is frequently updated. All staff are provided with a laminated card which has bullet points regarding action they should take if a disclosure is made or if they have any concerns. All visitors to the school are provided with a leaflet on safeguarding which is designed to protect the pupils and the visitors. The school's designated child protection officer has excellent links with the local authority and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The school also engages external providers to address the issues of safeguarding which provide sessions for staff pupils and their parents.

The school has clear expectations, policies and procedures on behavioural management including a rewards and sanctions booklet which is sent to parents and prospective new pupils. This information is also contained within the staff handbook. The school maintains clear records of sanctions. The school recognises the boarders' achievements with a system of rewards and merits as well as various school prizes. Throughout the inspection the behaviours of the pupils was exceptional, with the school's senior pupils provided the rest of the school with excellent role models.

The school has a comprehensive complaints procedure and process which includes a system for appeals. Staff were well informed on what to do if they had or received a complaint as were boarders on what they should do if they wish to make a complaint. Record of complaints and issues raised with the school are robust and include any action to be taken in light of the complaint.

All members of the lower sixth are given the opportunity to undertake prefect duties in both the juniorday house and The Manor. Both staff and pupils are involved in this selection process. The prefect induction process is comprehensive and includes role play and possible scenarios they may face. All prefects are provided with the same laminated card, credit card size, as all staff are on child protection. Prefects said they felt they were well prepared for their role and are well supported by the staff team which includes regular meeting with the Headmaster. The school does not appoint educational guardians.

The school has excellent fire and health and safety systems in place, which are supported by robust records. The school has an external health & safety consultant who visits every term and then meets with the school health and safety committee to discuss their findings. These committee reports contain action plans for work to be undertaken and subsequent meetings review these action plans and notes progress made. Fire drills are held at regular intervals, including night time drills and different escape routes are blocked so that boarders learn alternative routes of escape. All boarders were very clear on what to do in the event of fire. All staff receive training on fire issues with boarding staff receiving a higher level of training. The school has a comprehensive crisis management policy and all staff have a emergency action card which provides useful guidance on phone numbers. The school has a comprehensive system of risk assessment and these assessments are regularly monitored by a member of the senior management team reviewed, updated. When pupils are out of school on trips or activities pupils are provided with clear information on staying safe and given a laminated card with emergency telephone

numbers.

Boarders told the inspectors that staff respected their privacy and always knocked on dorm doors and waited for a response before entering. The supervision of boarders is appropriate and sensitively carried out.

The school has a vigorous recruitment process for all staff. Of the staff files inspected all contained the required information with one shortfall. This was the lack of a certificate of good conduct from the country of origin/residence of adults who live outside the United Kingdom. There was evidence of this being requested but they had not been received. The school has an appropriate agreement with adults who live in the school grounds and do not work at the school such as staff spouses. The school ensure that all taxi and bus drivers they use have Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.

The security of the school is robust. All the boarding houses have keypads and entry codes and these are changed termly. The school has a team of security guards employed for out of school hours. There are also CCTV cameras and sensor lights.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There are a vast range of activities, clubs and societies for boarders to access, approximately 20 to 25 per day. At the beginning and middle of each year the school hold a club and society fair for pupils. Information about of upcoming activities and events is listed in the pupils' diaries, on the school intranet and on notice boards. The school has a very active environmental group called the Big Green Thing which has implemented a variety in schemes throughout the school. Boarders are able to put forward ideas for new clubs and activities. As well as these events, which are thoroughly risk assessed, there are a large number of informal activities held in the individual houses. The school has a cyber café which pupils have extensive use of. All computers have the appropriate safeguards connected.

The individual support the boarders receive from staff is exceptional. This includes learning support, learning development and individual education plans. Staff have in depth knowledge of the young people in their care and are thus able to quickly identify and young person in need of additional support. The pupils have access to the school councillors, peer mentors and the student listening service, all of which the young people value. The tutor system is very significant to pupils. Boarders said they had excellent relationships with the staff who care for them.

There is no evidence of discrimination within the school. The school is proactive in promoting and celebrating difference and different cultures. This includes a range of multi-cultural celebrations. Those boarders who come from overseas receive support both in groups and one-to-one sessions. These support systems include the international society and the English as a foreign language club. Overseas student are regularly surveyed for their views on the school. Overseas boarders are very

positive about their experience at the school. They said they are made to feel very welcome, other pupils are interested in their culture and staff are sensitive to their individual needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Consultation with the pupils is excellent. This is done via a mixture of formal and informal systems. Boarders were able to provide a wide range of examples where their ideas had been implemented by the school. This has included extra buses needed for a trip to a local town to the variety of soft drinks available. One boarder said 'it's the little things that can be so important'. Boarders said that as they are fully involved they feel a sense of ownership within the school. They also said that if it is not possible to implement their ideas they are provided with a full explanation as to why.

The school has three qualified school counsellors which pupils are able to access confidentially. The counsellors have a separate room in the Sanatorium so pupils do not feel people know who they are going to see. Boarders told the inspector that they felt they had a wide range of staff that they could speak to if they needed. This group of staff also included the senior management team. The tutor system and the matrons at the school are valued by boarders.

Each house has pay phones for the boarders use, although the majority of boarders have mobile phones. Boarders also have internet access with the appropriate safeguards and access to communication software. Parents said that the school was very good at keeping them informed. The school website helps with this.

There is an excellent induction process for new boarders. This includes various events prior to the school term commencing. One of these is the allocation of a buddy for each new pupil who maintains contact through the summer holidays. Both parents and new boarders said they found the school written information very useful especially the individual house booklets. The school carries out regular surveys of new parents and the results of this informs future practice.

Boarders are able to access to the information and facilities outside of school. The school is involved in numerous charitable events and activities in the local and wider community. The pupils select which charities the school will be specifically involved in on an annual basis.

The relationship between the boarders and the staff is excellent. Boarders are very positive about the staff who care for them as were the parents. Boarders said that the staff were very caring, looked after them well, are fun and were always there for them.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Each house has a clear system to protect boarders' money and valuables. Boarders have access to lockable storage either provided for them by the school or they have provided it themselves. Each house keeps comprehensive records of any valuables they take care of.

Accommodation for the boarders varies from good to outstanding. The boarding houses are welcoming, homely, comfortably furnished and decorated. Boarders said they were happy with the accommodation and were very proud of their individual houses. Boarders are able to personalise their bedrooms and where there are shared rooms boarders have input into who they share with. With the exception of the girls' washing and toilet facilities in the Manor the rest of the school has ample toilet and bathing facilities. Some of the senior houses have en suite facilities. All houses have a range of common room and kitchen facilities.

The school shop carries a wide range of stock at high street prices. The staff at the shop also run the lost property system which works very well.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school provides excellent information for pupils and their parents. This includes a clear statement of their boarding principles. The information is provided via written documentation and the school website. Parents said they felt the website was very good. A significant part of this information is also in the pupils' diaries and on the school notice boards.

The school has a clear management structure and leadership. The staff team are very proactive with their development work for the school. Staff said that their views and ideas were welcomed by the senior management team. The staff team have a wide range of experience and are very committed to the school. The head and the deputy heads monitor the practice within the boarding houses. House parents said that although there is comprehensive guidance from the senior management team, they are allowed a fair amount of autonomy within their individual house as long as they observe the school's expectations.

The school has a comprehensive crisis management policy and procedures which is frequently reviewed and updated.

The organisation of the boarding house greatly contributes to the welfare of the boarders. All of the boarding houses operate a vertical boarding structure. Boarders said they enjoyed there being a mixed age range and the fact that they would be in the same house throughout their time at the school. Boarders at the Manor enjoyed it there and like being slightly away from the main school site. The boarding houses

provide a similar standard of accommodation and facilities. There is a comprehensive rolling refurbishment programme to ensure a good standard across the school campus.

As stated before in this report there is a robust system of risk assessment, record keeping and monitoring of these records. A number of these records are now electronic. There is clear evidence of actions being taken in the light of these processes to ensure pupils live and work in a safe nurturing environment.

Boarders are well supervised throughout the day and night both during the week and at weekends. This includes a good gender and age mix. Boarders said that there was always plenty of staff on duty and they always knew where to find a member of staff if needed. The house notice boards contain information on who is on duty. The school registers pupils electronically at lunch time and manually at the house assemblies at other times.

Staff files contained all the required information on induction; supervision, training, staff development and appraisal and staff job descriptions. The induction programme is very thorough and includes new staff shadowing experienced staff and receiving on going support. Staff said that they received a great deal of both formal and informal support from peers and senior management. Staff are able to access training courses as identified in their appraisal or through request.

The school has a comprehensive and clear handbook for staff, which provides guidance on boarding practice and principles as well as all the school policies and procedures. This is an electronic document and is subject to regular review and update. Staff said that they found this handbook very useful and were able to put forward ideas and suggestions for updates.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. It is evident throughout policies, documentation, operational conduct of the school and ethos of the school. The school respects, values and enables the individual to reach their potential while instilling in them the importance and value of community. The school offers an equality of opportunity through its bursary schemes

What must be done to secure future improvement?

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...

- ensure that for appointees who have lived outside the United Kingdom a certificate of good conduct is obtained from the country or countries they have been living in (NMS 38.1)

- ensure that the washing and toilet facilities at the Manor meet the ratios as detailed in National Minimum Standard 44.2 and 44.5. (NMS 44)