

Giggleswick Senior and Junior School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Michael McCleave / Helen Walker
Type of Inspection	Key

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Nominated person	
Date of last inspection	24 January 2007

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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

This is a co-educational boarding school with a Christian foundation. Whilst the majority of pupils are boarders, the school also caters for a minority of pupils who attend on a daily basis. There are seven boarding houses, four for boys, two for girls and a mixed house for younger boarders, some of whom attend the Junior School. The school provides the pupils with a range of extra curricular activities and there are extensive sporting facilities. A very well equipped medical centre provides health care and this is staffed by qualified nurses. Two doctors based in the nearby town visit the school on a regular basis to hold surgeries.

The school has achieved the Investors In People award.

Summary

The school provides the boarders with an excellent caring environment where they are supported positively to enjoy boarding life. Good health is promoted through a well resourced medical centre and there is a strong emphasis on healthy eating. The catering facilities are excellent. The approach to safeguarding is exceptional and the designated person has established strong professional links with the county safeguarding service. The boarders feel very safe living at the school.

It is clearly evident that boarders are supported to achieve their potential and to enjoy boarding life. The school has an open culture where the views of boarders are encouraged in order to make a contribution to boarding. The boarding houses are well maintained and comfortably furnished providing boarders with a safe and supportive place to live.

The ethos of the school encourages care and respect for differences in all areas of life. Equality and diversity is actively supported and encouraged throughout the school.

The management of boarding at the school is excellent and strong leadership is evident in each boarding house.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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 uniform wear and to carry out a full review of building and facilities provision. Appropriate action was taken by the head teacher to comply with the recommendations in full.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are actively encouraged to take good care of their health. Within the personal, social, health and citizenship education teaching programme, boarders are taught about safety considerations when using the internet and cyber bullying, and also about drugs, personal relationships and their personal health. Where appropriate visiting professionals, such as health visitors, are invited to speak to the boarders on specific health related topics. The school nurse and matrons also play an important role in overseeing the health and welfare of the boarders.

The school has an excellent anti-smoking programme to support those who wish to give up this habit. A well resourced medical centre ensures that boarders are cared for by qualified nurses at all times. Additionally, two doctors from a nearby clinic hold regular surgeries at the medical centre. Boarders have a choice of whether they wish to see a male or female doctor. Staff who administer first aid are all qualified and trained. A professional sports therapist and paramedics are available to deal with any injuries sustained during sporting events. The health facilities ensure that boarders are able to receive an excellent level of medical care. The school takes the health care needs of the boarders very seriously and has backed this up with the provision of excellent support facilities.

The catering at the school is very popular among the boarders. They enjoy nutritionally balanced meals in a spacious modern dining hall. There is an excellent choice of hot and cold meals on offer each day and any specialist diets are provided for. Cultural festivities are celebrated with themed meals and the dining hall is decorated to reflect the particular event being celebrated. This reflects the positive approach taken by the school towards equality and diversity. The salad bar has an excellent range of healthy options for those who do not wish to have a hot meal. There is a commitment to quality provision of meals and the catering manager meets regularly with the food committee in order to gauge views of the consumers. The positive commitment of the catering manager and staff ensure that meals provided are an important part of the health and well-being of the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The safeguarding of the boarders is a paramount responsibility that is taken very seriously by staff. Although it is recognised that bullying can take place, there is no evidence that this is an issue at the school. The boarders are a close knit group who demonstrate a strong sense of care for each other. It is evident that they would not tolerate any bullying and would ensure that staff were made aware, if any incident were to take place. There is a recognition at the school, that cyber bullying is an issue nationally. All forms of bullying are discussed widely in order to increase the awareness of boarders to this type of abuse. This is clearly stated in the parents' handbook, 'we aim to create an atmosphere of tolerance, openness and trust, in which teasing, harassment and bullying would find great difficulty in developing'.

The designated person for child protection has established excellent professional links with the local authority safeguarding service. This positive relationship has enabled the school to access training opportunities in safeguarding and for advice and guidance on child protection matters. The training is cascaded to all relevant staff by the designated person. This ensures that staff are kept up to date on safeguarding training and enhances their skills. Additionally, speakers who are expert in child protection visit the school to provide training to staff, thereby increasing their knowledge in this very important area. Internet safety is covered widely in personal, social, health and citizenship education teaching. The school further enhances the safety of the boarders through the Adventure, Activities, Licensing Authority (AALA). These measures clearly demonstrate how the school positively promotes the safety of the boarders.

The boarders say that discipline is fair and that it is appropriately administered by staff. The respect and care shown by boarders for each other means that serious sanctions are rarely required.

The safety of the boarders is enhanced by the regular fire safety checks carried out throughout the school. Records are well maintained and these confirm when appropriate safety checks have been carried out. Appropriate fire fighting equipment are located at key points in all boarding houses.

During out of school time boarders can enjoy private time alone or be with friends. They can go to their bedrooms or make use of the quiet library areas. However, it is recognised that staff have a duty of care and need to know the whereabouts of boarders.

The school operates a robust recruitment and selection process. It is standard policy for all applicants applying for work at the school to be subject to full criminal record checks and for references to be verbally confirmed before applicants commence their duties. The school exceeds the minimum standards by ensuring that all boarding staff are checked through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) every three years. This is excellent practice. Regular visitors to the staff accommodation on campus are also subject to suitable checks. The safety of boarders is further promoted with the requirement that contractors on site are subject to background checks. The movement of contractors on campus is carefully managed to protect the boarders. There is a clear procedure in place to ensure that relatives of staff living on the campus are fully aware of their responsibilities in respect of restrictions on access to parts of the campus. All these robust measures promote the safety of the boarders.

The boarding houses are secure from any public access with all doors having good quality locks. Security guards patrol the campus. There are risk assessments in place to ensure that all activity and environmental hazards are properly assessed. The quality of information is very good and ensures that boarders are not exposed to unnecessary risks on or off campus. The approach to safeguarding of boarders is excellent.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There are a wide range of adults at the school who can be approached for support and guidance. It is clearly evident that boarders are confident in being able to raise any concerns with individual staff or senior boarders. The school has the service of an independent listener from the local community, although this person is rarely used due to the staff available on campus. The caring ethos of the school is strongly reflected in the way boarders interact with each other. They are also respectful in the way they interact with staff. The boarders are clearly at ease as to whom they approach for support. For new boarders, there is the mentoring system, which works extremely well. This involves linking them with older established boarders, to advise, support and guide them during their early days of boarding life. This is excellent support to those who are beginning boarding life at the school.

Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination. As one boarder commented, 'it's not about colour or race, but how you behave towards others that counts'. There are different cultures and religions represented at the school and firm friendships have been established. Loyalty to each other and the caring philosophy of the school, preclude the likelihood of racism or discrimination taking place. This ensures that boarders live in harmony with each other. It is also a clear demonstration of the positive culture at the school in promoting equality and diversity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There is an open culture at the school whereby the views and opinions of boarders is valued. Forums such as the food committee, school council, praepostors (prefects) meetings, ensure that information about boarding life is communicated to the senior management of the school. This is in addition to the informal discussions that take place continually in the various houses. The school is enriched by the free flow of information, ensuring that the head teacher and senior managers have a positive feel for the views of boarders and are aware if any changes require consideration.

Boarding life is very active, therefore, positive encouragement is given to boarders to remind them to maintain contact with their families. There is free use of the library computers to email home and most boarders have access to a mobile phone. The school hosts an induction week during the summer before the start of term, this is to welcome new boarders and their parents. It is also an opportunity for new boarders to meet their house staff and peers. This event is also intended to introduce new boarders to their allocated mentor, who will be responsible for ensuring that they are guided and supported during their early days of boarding life. This is excellent practice and encourages friendships to develop and helps to improve the self confidence of boarders, especially those from abroad.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarding accommodation is good and provides the boarders with clean and well maintained boarding houses. Older boarders enjoy single bedrooms and those who share sleeping accommodation, have sufficient personal space available to them. Every boarder has a lockable cupboard to keep personal items safe. Showers and toilet facilities are clean and are located near to the bed rooms. There is an ongoing refurbishment programme to upgrade these facilities.

The boarding houses each have a common room where boarders congregate on evenings and weekends to relax and socialise. These are well maintained and suitably furnished and decorated. The seating in the various common rooms, generally consists of comfortable settees and differing styles of single chairs. Some boarders, however, would prefer to have more settees to replace many of the single chairs. Although comfortable, boarders commented that, 'they are like chairs in the doctor's surgery'. The sixth form common room is a well appointed building that has games facilities, comfortable sitting areas and a large screen television.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school positively promotes care and respect for each other. Although this is a school based on Christian traditions, boarders from all religious and cultural backgrounds are welcomed. Boarders irrespective of race or religion, become firm friends and as some commented, 'we get on well with everybody and have many friends, it doesn't matter where we come from'. Another said, 'I have been made to feel part of the school'. Those boarders from a non Christian background are supported to follow their religion and there is clear evidence to confirm that this is the case. Themed meals are held to celebrate certain cultures and through the personal, social, health and citizenship

education teaching programme, boarders are introduced to a range of topics that supports equality and diversity. The school is justifiably proud of the positive approach taken to embrace equality and diversity.

The school's mission statement is clearly indicated in a number of key documents that are available to staff and parents.

The management of boarding is excellent. Each house has a team of staff, who are always available to support and assist boarders should they have a problem or concerns they wish to discuss. The boarders are happy with life in their respective houses and they have a deep sense of loyalty for their house. There are no major or inappropriate discrepancies in the principles or practice of boarding between the different boarding houses. The common theme throughout is one of team work among the staff to ensure that each house follows the same principles of care and support for the boarders. The head of each boarding house is responsible for the continued training and development of their staff. This ensures that boarders are cared for by dedicated and committed staff who are appropriately trained. The school demonstrates a positive commitment to staff development and this is reflected in the Investors In People award. This is commendable.

All records are well maintained and these include environmental risk assessments, sanctions, accidents and complaints. Where there are concerns about individual boarders and their welfare, very clear confidential records are maintained. It is evident that through the strong leadership of the head teacher and the senior management team, staff are provided with support and effective management. They have an excellent understanding of their duties. The head of each boarding house is in daily contact with their boarding staff and communication is very effective. This ensures the efficient operation of the boarding provision and promotes safeguarding of the boarders.

Boarding is a positive and enriching experience 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

There are no recommendations.