

Fettes College School Care Accommodation Service

Carrington Road
Edinburgh
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 November 2022

Service provided by:
Fettes College Limited

Service provider number:
SP2022000157

Service no:
CS2022000225

About the service

Fettes College is a school care accommodation service forming part of an independent, co-educational school with boarding places for up to 539 children and young people aged from seven to 18. It has a total of 11 boarding houses: two for junior pupils up to 13; eight for senior school pupils up to 17; and one for upper sixth students. Craigleith, the upper sixth house, provides en suite, mainly single bedrooms. The other houses have mainly shared bedrooms. The school is situated on a large campus close to the centre of Edinburgh. It has a range of facilities for pupils, including a dining hall, chapel, medical centre, indoor and outdoor sports courts and pitches, gym, swimming pool, rifle range, theatre and concert hall.

It should be noted that following the provider becoming a new legal entity, the Care Inspectorate cancelled the registration of the previous service (also known as Fettes College) in August 2022. This new service was registered at the same time.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place over four days between 7 and 10 November 2022. Three of the visits extended into the early evening. The inspection was carried out by five inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about the service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the service was registered. In making our evaluations of the service, we:

- reviewed survey responses from 398 pupils, 84 parents and 81 staff
- spoke with approximately 162 pupils
- spoke with approximately 46 staff, managers and members of the governing board
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Almost all pupils had a high level of satisfaction with the service overall.
- Almost all pupils felt safe and had adults they trusted and felt comfortable talking to.
- Pupils had many opportunities to express their views about, engage in and improve the boarding experience, though a few felt these did not always lead to the changes they wanted.
- Pupils benefitted from the service's impressive, holistic approach to promoting health and wellbeing.
- Pupils had access to an extensive campus offering abundant opportunities for learning, stimulation and physical activity.
- Leaders demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement to maximise young people's outcomes and experiences.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
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Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as **very good**, which means the service demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for young people.

Almost all young people told us they felt safe and parents' responses indicated very high levels of confidence in arrangements for preventing harm. Staff were aware of their responsibilities for protecting pupils. Whilst some young people felt the service's response to bullying could be better, a review of relevant records suggested managers provided effective leadership in this area. The board demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting a range of relevant safeguarding initiatives. Moving forward, the board could consider how to ensure that all the boarding houses have a consistent level of contact with governors to ensure they have good quality information about pupils' experiences. An independent safeguarding audit of the service had found a number of strengths and provided suggestions for continuous improvement. These all contributed to pupils' protection. We reminded managers about submitting relevant notifications of significant events to the Care Inspectorate. We also offered suggestions for improving documentation of risk assessment processes in the event of concerns about pupils' safety.

Almost all pupils had high levels of satisfaction with the quality of care overall and most experienced warm and positive relationships with staff to whom they could turn in times of difficulty. These provided security and enhanced their experiences. We asked managers to look at approaches to specific aspects of care and culture following comments from a small number of pupils. Most pupils said they would be listened to if they felt something was wrong or unfair. We concluded that managers had responded appropriately to complaints, though could review how they share findings with young people to ensure transparency. Some pupils felt the school's response to their suggestions and requests was sometimes slow. Nevertheless, we found an impressive range of consultation activities and innovative, student-led initiatives that supported empowerment and engagement in school life and were making a difference to them. A few parents felt the school could communicate more effectively about school events and pupils' progress.

Boarding house environments were comfortable, pleasant and age-appropriate overall, with space for pupils to relax outside school hours. An extensive programme for updating and improving the houses was underway and should enhance pupils' experiences.

Pupils received the right support to maximise their physical health. Boarding staff worked closely with the 24-hour medical team, which had staff with a wide range of skills. Management of medication contributed to positive health outcomes and needed only minor adjustments to some aspects of recording, monitoring and storage. There was a comprehensive system for identifying, planning and reviewing pupils' individual support needs, though some pupils' personal plans needed more consistent, specific and measurable goals to maximise progress. The quality of mental health support for pupils was also impressive, as was provision for learning about general wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.

Almost all pupils rated food highly. They had lots of choice and variety to meet a range of preferences, cultural needs and dietary requirements. The introduction of self-service at most meals was very popular and meant young people had more control of portion sizes.

As well as very good support for learning, pupils had an extensive range of out-of-school activities and opportunities to choose from so they could reach their potential and make the most of their time at Fettes. The site's proximity to the city of Edinburgh contributed to providing rich and varied experiences for all ages.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life	5 - Very Good

To find out more

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Fettes College

School Care Accommodation Service

Carrington Road
Edinburgh
EH4 1QX

Telephone: 0131 311 6701

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 7 November 2017

Service provided by:
Fettes College

Service provider number:
SP2005007903

Care service number:
CS2005111166

About the service

Fettes College is a school care accommodation service. It is an independent, co-educational school with boarding places for up to 602 children and young people. The preparatory school can accommodate up to 73 in two boarding houses and the senior school up to 529 in nine boarding houses. This includes a sixth form house for up to 107 young people. The school also has day pupils though we do not inspect this provision. It is situated in the north of Edinburgh.

The service provider is the Governors of the Fettes Trust (otherwise known as Fettes College or the 'Trust'). It is a body corporate and registered Scottish charity.

It has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since April 2011.

What people told us

We asked the service to forward an electronic survey to all boarders and received 422 anonymous responses out of a possible 431, an outstanding response rate. The questions covered a wide range of aspects of the boarding experience at Fettes and there was a large number of additional comments. We shared the statistical collated responses with managers, though not the individual comments, for reasons of confidentiality. The age range of the young people with whom we had contact was seven to 18.

We also received 42 e-mail responses to a short questionnaire sent to parents and carers.

During the inspection visits we spoke directly with a total of 77 children and young people both individually and in groups, in addition to having lunch and brief conversations with an additional six or so young people.

Responses to the electronic survey indicate that:

- Over 94% were happy or very happy with the overall quality of care.
- Over 80% felt they were consulted about changes and their views taken seriously.
- About 89% felt that rules were clear and fair.
- About 87% responded positively about senior pupils.
- About 73% said staff usually noticed if they needed help or support with anything and made sure they got it.
- About 87% said they could keep in touch with their families easily.
- About 68% said that bullying was dealt with quickly, with a sizable minority answering 'don't know'.
- About 97% felt safe at Fettes.
- About 82% felt there was someone they could trust to talk to about personal issues.
- Just over 69% felt they would be able to complain about anything being wrong or unfair and treated seriously.

Feedback about the other matters we discussed with young people was largely very positive, with some examples including:

- Comments about the food at Fettes was mixed. The service catered for individual dietary requirements well. They liked brunch on Sundays.
- There were a number of ways of putting their views forward.
- There was greater freedom in senior school.
- Some had experienced homesickness but been supported through it by staff and their friends.
- Most felt well looked after when they were ill.
- They felt bullying was addressed effectively by staff and had lots of discussions about this and similar issues.
- A minority would have preferred chapel attendance on Sunday not to be compulsory.
- Some felt life at Fettes was very busy and could be very tiring.
- Many told us they would have very good memories of life at Fettes, had made good friends and had lots of opportunities.

There was also a very high level of satisfaction amongst parents and carers:

- A large majority felt the service kept them well-informed about their children. A minority told us they were not regularly asked for their views and that updates tended to centre on academic progress.
- All felt able to speak with staff about concerns or give suggestions about their child's wellbeing, saying that matrons or housemasters/mistresses would be the main point of contact.
- A large majority were happy that their children were safe at Fettes.
- Parents gave a wide range of responses to a question about the most positive aspects of the boarding experience. These included team spirit, friendships, sporting and extra-curricular activities, independence and self-discipline.
- Some made suggestions for improvement which we will share with managers.

Self assessment

We did not ask services to submit self-assessments this year, focusing instead on their development and improvement plans.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	6 - Excellent

What the service does well

Performance in both quality themes was excellent. The service had maintained this exceptional standard since the previous inspection.

Staff's efforts to keep young people safe and well were very successful. This ranged from much improved security of the site, measures to raise awareness of and address bullying, child protection arrangements, critical incident planning and impressive pastoral care. The latter was a central component of Fettes and was ably supported by key staff. The recent development of the wellbeing 'Hub' was an exciting initiative. Whilst views about food were mixed, we found meals were well-presented and tasty, with lots of choice that met a wide range of needs and preferences. Young people were very active and had lots of fresh air. They received high quality health support from pastoral staff and an on-site medical team.

There was a very wide choice of activities and opportunities, reflecting a holistic approach to development. The service celebrated young people's many and varied achievements. The preparatory school in particular was impressively nurturing and child-centred, though this extended across the whole service. We found numerous examples of positive peer support and staff who demonstrated sincere interest and commitment. The key pastoral team approach was very successful and appreciated by young people and parents. The service did excellent work in the area of equality and diversity.

The framework for consultation included ongoing opportunities for young people to express their views, make suggestions and make a full contribution to life at Fettes, as well as influencing improvement.

An ethos of continuous improvement was very evident. Ongoing self-evaluation enabled the service to be very well-informed about changes and developments in the sector and there were regular reviews of policies, procedures and frameworks for practice. There was a positive and responsive approach to external regulation.

External management of the service ensured that the board had a very sound grasp of service performance. Governors provided very strong, stable, strategic direction as well as support for the new headteacher. They placed a high priority on safeguarding young people, taking corporate parenting responsibilities very seriously.

Operational leadership at all levels was also extremely impressive. Roles were well-defined and the senior management team worked constructively together to excellent effect. These leadership values extended to senior pupils and prefects for example, who were a credit to the school. The new head had already begun a systematic process of seeking the views of all stakeholders to develop an analysis that will help determine longer-term planning. School and house improvement plans were being implemented and provided a clear way forward for staff. We found constructive and beneficial relationships with other services in the sector.

What the service could do better

The service was in the process of reviewing and developing personal plans as well as implementing a new electronic data management system. We offered advice in this area, including having a 'SMART' format where additional needs have been identified. Ensuring that key pastoral staff have access to these plans is essential, as is ensuring that young people are aware of decisions.

Any sanctions should also be clearly recorded.

The service should consider how they can ensure a more pro-active approach to asking parents their views and widening the scope of information about young people's progress, whilst remaining proportionate.

There was scope to improve some aspects of medication management, though we found no evidence of any negative outcomes.

Other suggestions for improvements to management and leadership that were largely about processes and did not affect the quality of outcomes and experiences for young people.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
8 Oct 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	6 - Excellent
		Management and leadership	6 - Excellent
16 Mar 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	6 - Excellent
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
25 Jan 2011	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
25 Jun 2008	Announced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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