

# Royal Hospital School

Inspection report for boarding school

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC024592      |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 16 March 2009 |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Brian Lock    |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key           |

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| <b>Registered person</b>       | Howard Blackett   |
| <b>Head / Principal</b>        | Howard Blackett   |
| <b>Nominated person</b>        |   |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 20 March 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**

Set in 200 acres of stunning Suffolk countryside the School was founded in 1712 in Greenwich. The School moved to its present site in 1933 and was originally intended to educate boys for service in the Royal Navy. Today, it is a thriving independent boarding and day school for girls and boys aged 11 to 18 years, with over 600 full boarders and almost all teaching and support staff living on site.

There are eleven boarding houses, four for girls, six for boys and one of mixed gender house for the sixth form pupils. The School is in the middle of a major refurbishment programme to bring all the boarding accommodation up to an outstanding standard. The current strategic intention for the School is to increase the number of day pupils, increasing and developing greater links with the local area and offering more places to fee paying pupils.

### **Summary**

The Royal Hospital School is a place where pupils say they feel safe, enjoy being at the School and engage in the full range of activities including those ceremonies steeped in naval history. The quality of health care and catering is good as is the positive contribution. Enjoying and achieving is assessed as being outstanding. The School has been judged as satisfactory overall because it has failed to follow its own policies and the national minimum standards for child protection, recruitment of staff and host families which could potentially put pupils at risk. It is acknowledged that the range of activities offered is outstanding. The current standard of boarding provision is clearly very different depending on whether a pupil lives in a recently refurbished house or not but the quality of the support and care offered is very good across the whole school. The management of the boarding provision is very good but has been marked down as a result of the less than robust practice demonstrated in safeguarding. The School over all potentially offers a safe, caring environment for its pupils.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

All the recommendations made at the last inspection in 2006 have been met.

The refurbishment programme for the boarding houses is well under way and the quality of the refurbished houses is excellent.

Several new appointments across the School has strengthened the boarding provision which continues to develop in a really positive way.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Pupils benefit from very good medical care arranged by the School's own medical centre which is staffed by qualified nurses. The medical centre is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The centre has daily visits from a local GP during the week. This is supported by the option of appointments at a local GP surgery or the pupils' own GP if they live locally. The medical centre also offers in-patient dentistry and has a range of treatment rooms. The centre

can accommodate up to 35 pupils in the sick bay which is used on a regular basis. The staff also arrange or refer on pupils for specialist input as appropriate. The nurses offer support and input on a range of medical issues such as cessation of smoking. There is good communication between house staff and the medical centre. Pupils confirm that they get good support from the medical centre and are clear how they can access these services. Parents say they are very pleased with the service and communication they receive from the medical centre staff. Routine prescribed medication and homely remedies are administered by the matrons in the individual houses.

The School ensures that health recording is kept up to date and staff are fully aware of pupils' health and welfare needs. Medical consents from parents, as well as nurses and staff trained in first aid, ensure that emergency treatment can be provided when necessary. Pupils' health is protected and promoted by the safe storage and administration of medication, but would benefit from a policy to support or offer guidance on the administration of homely remedies and a stock control system for medication which would ensure appropriate medication has been administered. Details of allergies are issued by the medical centre but these are not easily accessible in all the houses. Full details are held of any accident or injury that pupils may sustain.

Pupils benefit from a good quality catering provision which provides nutritious and well-balanced meals. Breakfast and lunch are seen by most pupils as good with supper being not so good. The size of the school dictates a need for a number of seatings and this works well in practice with very limited queuing. A good system is in place to support pupils with special dietary needs. Fruit is freely available at all times in each of the boarding houses. Pupils have access to a range of food in each of the houses such as toast, cereal, supplies from their own reserves and house tuck shops.

Records of the School's food committee, discussions with pupils and catering staff demonstrate a real effort is made to meet the needs of the pupils.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Pupils are supported in a safe and nurturing environment where their welfare is paramount but this is compromised by a less than robust recruitment procedure. They are protected effectively though the School's positive approach to dealing with bullying. Pupils are very much involved in the School's approach and have specifically trained peer support counsellors (ABC) in addition to school and house prefects. Peer support in the School is excellent. The process for appointing prefects and their training is outstanding. This ensures prefects have an awareness of bullying and a wider understanding of child protection issues and their consequences.

The School's child protection policies and procedures are in line with the local Safeguarding Children's policies but are not always followed presenting a potential risk to pupils. Not all staff are aware of the process to report concerns. All house and academic staff received child protection training from an external source in 2007 and the School's Child Protection Co-ordinator has offered further input to some staff involved in boarding earlier this year. Not all support staff have received child protection training either as part of their induction or as further training. Good links exist between the Child Protection Co-ordinator and the Local Safe Guarding Board.

Pupils are encouraged to develop self-discipline and the ethos of the school supports the positive reinforcement of good behaviour. This is achieved through the minimal use of punishments and a developing culture which celebrates achievement via such initiatives as 'cause for applause' whereby pupils are applauded by peers for any success. The School's policies and guidelines are followed by all the houses with only minor variations which the pupils do not see as an issue. Children confirmed that they considered punishments to be fair.

The School has an effective missing persons policy which has been seen to work effectively. The importance of a commitment to safeguarding each other is fundamental in this process.

The thorough and effective complaints procedure protects and promotes pupils welfare. Parents and pupils are informed how they can raise any concerns or complaints they may have. Pupils confirmed that they know both how to raise any concern or worries, and that feel confident it would be dealt with appropriately and promptly. Pupils were very clear that there are a range of adults and peers across the School that they can go to if they have any concerns whatsoever. Records demonstrate all complaints are taken seriously, with clear outcomes and action points as required.

Pupils are protected from fire by various safety precautions. Regular fire evacuation drills take place and fire safety equipment is checked. Fire risk assessments are in place but the annual review is only evidenced by changing the year of the review on the initial assessment. Fire safety would be increased if a fire evacuation for new boarders was undertaken within a few days of the start of term rather than within a few weeks.

Boarders' privacy is respected by non-intrusive staff who are sensitive when entering boarders' dormitories and study areas.

Boarders' welfare is not protected as the School's own recruitment policies are not followed in all cases. Some staff have been employed without references and a very small number without a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. In the case of host families not all family members have been fully vetted or have CRB checks in place. All checks for catering staff are in place.

The School site is extremely large, so public access is difficult to control, but the School reports no particular problems. The system to monitor external use of the site is not robust as the School has details of some adults' CRBs but not all. All visitors to the School are required to report to reception and are required to sign in and wear badges throughout their visits. Pupils and staff alike challenge strangers on the School site in a positive way. Each House has access controlled by a keypad and has individual burglar alarms.

Pupils are safeguarded by a raft of risk assessments. Health and Safety issues are prioritised by the maintenance team and staff work effectively to ensure pupils are protected from unavoidable hazards. Pupils are further protected by annual checks of all electrical appliances.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils benefit from excellent levels of support provided by all staff at the School. All pupils who expressed a view said that the Royal Hospital School is a good school to be at and the vast majority say they enjoy being at the school. Peer group and buddying support is outstanding.

Pupils' lives are enhanced through the School's commitment to equality of opportunity for all. Individualised support provided to pupils is sensitive to their specific needs. Arrangements are made for those pupils whose first language is not English. Good provision is made for pupils with any special dietary needs. Pupils are fully supported to integrate into both the boarding provision and the School.

The school offers an exceptional range of opportunities to all pupils, including sport, academic, arts and drama. The needs and desires of the vast majority of the pupils are being met. Both boys and girls represent the School and Suffolk in a wide range of sporting events.

Pupils are involved in a range of expeditions, demonstrations, field trips and leisure activities throughout the year both across the country and abroad.

Pupils say it is fun to be at the School and they enjoy life for the most part whilst at the School.

Pupils say that they feel welcomed by everyone from the first day they arrive and continue to feel included.

Parents say they are impressed with the range and breath of opportunities offered.

Risk assessments for out of school and high risk activities are in place.

There are developing links with the local community and opportunities to work with the community, which is continuing to be develop. The School works hard to support charities and has raised a considerable sum for a range of charities over several years.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The School fosters a whole school community approach which the pupils embrace. There is an abundance of opportunities for listening and obtaining the views of pupils which are integrated into the running of the school. These include the school council, the food committee, house meetings, daily meetings and suggestion boxes in the houses are being introduced. The recording of the house meetings is not consistent so a more consistent approach to recording to reflect the consultation process would be beneficial. The relationship between house staff and pupils is exceptionally good. Some matron are seen as 'mum' and would be the first point of contact for some pupils and are an integrated part of the house system. Pupils say that they do choose who they speak to as it depends on the issue. The majority of pupils do speak to their house masters/mistress because they feel they will be listened to. The School has an independent listener but pupils seem unaware of her as they do not feel the need to go outside the School to speak to people.

The School demonstrates a positive attitude to boarders' families and the need for parental contact. Contact with family and friends is encouraged. All pupils are able to access the internet and a house phone to make contact with families and most have use of a mobile phone for use at specific times during the evenings and at weekends.

Parents are contacted in the event of any concern or possible pupil disciplinary action.

There are very good formal introductions for new pupils to the School. Potential boarders are offered the opportunity to have a 'taste' of boarding prior to starting on a full-time basis. Several pupils have decided to board following a period of being day pupils.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Pocket money is held by housemasters/mistress in the individual houses and is accounted for appropriately.

The School is in the middle of a major refurbishment programme. Four of the mainstream houses have been refurbished and re-occupied. Two houses are near completion and the headmaster announced that two further houses will be refurbished in the next academic year. Plans for the remaining two houses have not yet been finalised. The standard of accommodation is significantly different between those houses that have been refurbished and those that have not. In the refurbished houses there is increased communal space, en suite facilities for older boarders, more single studies and smaller dormitories for the younger boarders, offering an outstanding quality of accommodation. The School is fully aware of the defects of the houses awaiting refurbishment. There are adequate numbers of toilets and showers in the un-refurbished houses but not all the facilities are used by the pupils as some are more effective than others. There are a small number of toilets without locks in one house.

One house has been allocated as the senior house which is the only mixed gender house. Pupils tend to have more autonomy and is more in line with University type accommodation. In general this system is working well.

A small number of pupils access host families for short periods of time. The accommodation, checks required and written records of visits are not being completed as required.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

A comprehensive statement of boarding principles and practice is readily available to parents, boarders and staff. The school produces regular updates for parents, both on a whole school basis but also from individual houses. The School has its own website which is regularly updated.

The School has a very good range of Crisis Plans which covers most of the eventualities that might potentially arise. Copies of the plans and boxes of emergency supports are placed strategically around the school. The pack needs an up-to-date plan of the School which includes the music block and all pupils have an emergency telephone contact number listed.

All documentation needs to be reviewed to ensure they refer to Ofsted as the inspectorate and the single contact number of 08456 40 40 40.

All pupils say they feel part of the School and have easily fitted into the houses they live in, whatever their cultural, religious or ethnic background. There are positive images relating to gender, disability, race and ethnicity around the school which could be further developed. Some of the pupil displays are a bit dated and could be replaced with current pupils work to enable them to have even more pride in their School.

Pupils benefit from a very well run School. The whole of the senior management team has a role within the boarding provision and offer an on-call duty rota to support boarding. The level of support to the boarding houses is very good. The current system and practice for boarding works well. Plans to create junior boarding houses from September 2009 should only add to the positive experience of boarders.

Boarders' welfare is protected and promoted by good staffing levels during the day and at night. Training opportunities are available and encouraged for all staff but this information is based on what staff told us. There is no training plan or matrix available which covers all aspects of staff training. The staff handbook is available to all staff in paper or electronic formats. Boarders are aware of who is on duty and how to summon assistance should the need arise. The staff ensure that the physical, social and educational needs of boarders are being met, as the need arises. Evidence obtained during the inspection indicates the boarding provision is being managed in an exceptional manner, some houses are nearer to outstanding than others.

The School has a governor with responsibility for boarding who visits each house and meets with the matrons on an annual basis. A report is prepared for the headmaster for inclusion at the appropriate governors' meeting. The governor with this responsibility is coming to the end of their tenure so it would appear that this is an ideal time to review this role and write a brief prior to appointing a new governor to this role. Greenwich Hospital still play a significant and important role within governors' meetings but a new chair of governors has recently been appointed, who lives locally and is in very close contact with both the school and head master.

## 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 |
|----------|--------|----------|
|----------|--------|----------|

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- introduce a stock control system in the boarding houses and ensure staff are aware of all known drug reactions, major allergies and notable medical conditions to ensure the safety of pupils NMS 7
- ensure all staff follow a protocol, written by the nurse, for the provision of non-prescription 'household' medicines to boarders. NMS 15.9
- ensure all staff are recruited in line with the School's own policies and procedures and the National Minimum Standards, which require all staff to have Criminal Bureau Checks, references and identity checks NMS 38.2
- ensure that all the requirements of the National Minimum Standards are met in respect of hostfamilies, including full CRB checks on all adult family members, visits all potential families and completes an annual written assessment of the host families NMS 51

- ensure that all staff are aware of and follow the School's own Child Protection policies at all times NMS
- ensure all staff receive appropriate Child Protection training NMS 3
- ensure that all house meetings are clearly recorded and made available to all boarders in line with the School's policy NMS 12.
- ensure that all boarding houses have sufficient effective showers in every house and that all toilet doors are fitted with locks in working order NMS 44.3 and 44.6