

Bootham School

Inspection report for boarding school

Unique reference number	SC015846
Inspection date	11/05/2011
Inspector	Simon Morley
Type of inspection	Social Care Inspection

Setting address	Bootham School, 49-57 Bootham, YORK, YO30 7BU
------------------------	---

Telephone number	01904 623636
Email	
Registered person	Bootham School
Head/ Principal	Jonathan Taylor
Nominated person	Jonathan Taylor
Date of last inspection	05/11/2007

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

Bootham School was founded by the Quakers in 1823 and is a co-educational day and boarding school for children aged between 11 and 18 years. The school is located close to the centre of York and is sited within its own grounds which include playing fields, a sports hall, swimming pool and three boarding houses. The school has a medical centre, staffed by fully qualified nurses.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The inspection was announced with five working days notice given to the head of the school. The inspection looked at how outcomes for the key boarding school national minimum standards are promoted within the Every Child Matters outcome groups.

The overall outcome judgement is good and there are several outstanding features of the school. The outcome judgements in being healthy, enjoying and achieving, and positive contribution are outstanding. Staying safe, economic well-being and organisation are judged to be good.

The school's outstanding features relate to: the commitment and outcomes for boarders to have healthy lifestyles; the promotion of a caring community; pupils' behaviour; holistic support for boarders' welfare and development; and support for boarders to influence the management of the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good, characterised by a sense of trust, respect for and tolerance of others within a relaxed and open community.

All national minimum standards are met and there are no recommendations for further improvement.

Improvements since the last inspection

Recommendations made at the last inspection in connection to record keeping, policies, procedures and information about the school have all been met. This helps to promote the health, safety and welfare of boarders.

There is better access for all boarders regardless of age to a wide range of activities to promote their enjoyment.

Boarders benefit from an improved quality of accommodation, bedroom furniture and having somewhere safe to keep personal belongings.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There is excellent practice and commitment to ensuring the health and welfare of boarders is outstanding. Health promotion is integrated throughout the school life. This includes the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, The Lodge (medical centre), health services, catering, and activities.

The Lodge is an effective well run medical centre with extended opening hours and on-call support from qualified nursing staff. Boarders have good access to health services from doctors, dentists and opticians as well as specialist services in the York area. Boarders commented that they are well looked after if they get ill and can 'drop-in' anytime to The Lodge during opening time. Boarders' specific individual health needs are well met. The way staff promote: the individuality of boarders; personal responsibility; equality and acceptance of others fosters a welcoming, friendly community in which boarders' emotional well being flourishes.

Boarders learn about health issues from the PSHE programme which includes topics about healthy eating, sexual health, smoking and alcohol. This programme is enhanced by a network of well-informed staff who boarders trust and feel able to discuss concerns with. This results in boarders gaining appropriate knowledge to help them make informed choices and have healthy lifestyles.

There are robust health promotion policies and good safe practice for the use of medication and provision of first aid. The required parental consent is obtained to ensure medical matters are dealt with according to their wishes. Staff are trained in first aid in the event of any accidents or injury.

There is very good quality, freshly prepared food, provided from local suppliers where possible. There is a wide choice of healthy meals, hot and cold, with a salad bar and fresh fruit all served in the school dining room. The views of boarders are gathered through the student council and food committee. The catering staff are enthusiastic at delivering boarders quality, healthy food which meets the diverse range of boarders preferences and dietary needs. There is plenty to eat and drink at each meal and additional snacks and drinks are provided in each boarding house. Boarders report that they like the school food which has improved in quality. The student council has influenced the catering to be more eco-friendly and contribute to the school's eco plan. This has helped save money, reduced the school's carbon footprint and contributes to boarders' understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Boarders can make a range of snacks and cook meals in their boarding house to help increase their independence skills. Sixth form students in particular receive extra support to learn to shop and cook healthily on a budget helping prepare them for the transition to university.

There is a wide range of activities, well liked by the boarders who frequently take part in various sports helping to keep them fit and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Boarders feel safe and value the friendly, community life at the school. Good safeguarding practice in the school helps ensure boarders welfare is effectively promoted and protected.

Staff provide very good pastoral care ensuring a safe place for boarders to be cared for away from home. Boarders and day pupils are encouraged to be kind to one another and consider the impact their behaviour may have on someone else. The Quaker ethos and principles are a notable strength. Boarders commented 'the rules are not strict here, we are taught to be responsible for our actions which helps us develop and be ready for adulthood'. As a result boarders behave well, are considerate of each other and there are extremely low levels of any bullying. Discipline is rarely needed and boarders view what rules there are as fair.

Staff know how to respond if they are concerned about a boarder's safety or welfare and who to report this to. The school has developed a good working relationship with the local authority who help with advice and guidance about safeguarding concerns. Designated staff promote safeguarding within the school and boarders learn how to keep themselves safe including internet safety. The school has an accessible complaints procedure known to boarders and their parents who are happy with the way their views and concerns are listened to.

Health and safety across the school site is managed very well. Boarding houses are safe to live in and secure from unwanted intrusion. Boarders know what the evacuation procedures are in the event of a fire and practice this regularly. Risks are managed well to ensure the safety of boarders including activities such as swimming, fencing, rock climbing and enjoy trips out and abroad, which are regularly encouraged.

There are suitable recruitment procedures which include the required vetting and safety checks before staff start to work in the school. Staff responsible for recruitment are trained in safe recruitment practices, ensure the necessary checks are made and recorded. This helps protect boarders welfare by only employing staff suitable to work with young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There is a great range of activities and opportunities that encourage boarders to participate and try new things. This is a notable strength of the school. Boarders have access to school facilities that offer a variety of entertainment including, sports, music, art and crafts, cooking, computers, photography, bee keeping and bell ringing. There is a dedicated activities co-ordinator who ensures that there is

something different and fun to do each day. There are regular day trips out at weekends, field trips and holidays abroad. Boarders benefit from safe, supervised indoor and outdoor activity areas. As one boarder reflected 'you can only be bored here if you chose to be'. Day pupils like the option to be a flexi-boarder and commented 'I love the chance to board it is great fun and I get to spend time with my mates'. Similarly full-boarders make good use of the city centre and benefit from friendships with day pupils who live locally.

The pastoral care provided is excellent and another strength of this school. Many boarders commented how friendly and welcoming the school is. 'You can fit in easily here' typifies the school atmosphere. Everyone is treated equally and everyone's individuality is valued and promoted. Boarders like the Quaker ethos and commented that 'staff treat you as an equal which helps you learn and feel respected'. This is integrated throughout the school in classes as well as the boarding houses. There is always some one to talk to and staff are very approachable and willing to help. The school counselling service is well know and offers an accessible and confidential service. Boarders who have specific individual needs are supported well ensuring their stay at the school is enjoyable as one boarder commented 'the school could not do anymore for me'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There is excellent encouragement for boarders to make decisions about their lives. Their inclusion in the running of the boarding houses and school is outstanding. This is founded in the high quality of relationships with staff and the manner in which the school is run. Boarders are treated with respect and dignity, seen as individuals, in Quaker terms staff 'see the God in everyone'. Equality flourishes as no one, no academic subject or activity is seen as more important than the others. As a result boarders develop their decision making skills, learn from their mistakes and each one makes a valid contribution to the school community.

Boarders also benefit from the extra enjoyment and achievement through their contributions to the local community, For example: conservation projects; work with the homeless; street dancing; and drama at the local theatre. There are both formal and informal ways boarders can influence school life. This can be through the food committee, student council, house meetings and conversation with staff. Influence extends to: choosing the head girl and boy; changes to menus; decision making about Saturday school; activities; the school's eco-plan and equipment for the boarding houses.

Boarders are able to maintain contact with family and friends. Pay phones, skype, email and letters are all encouraged and boarders also have their own mobile telephones. There is a regular school newsletter sent to parents and a recently installed electronic parent portal. Parents can access this to see the latest reports about their children's progress.

New boarders are very welcome and find it easy to settle in to their new surroundings. There is a good detailed information and the opportunity to try out the school with overnight stays before coming to board. Boarders commented, 'you make friends easily', 'it is homely and easy to settle in'. The induction of new boarders is managed in a sensitive and caring way, indicative of the school's ethos.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarding accommodation is provided in three different houses, Rowntree for girls aged 11 to 18, Fox for boys aged 11 to 18 and Evelyn for boys in their first year of the sixth form.

There has been significant development and refurbishment of boarders accommodation since the last inspection. All houses are cleaned and maintained to a good standard by dedicated teams of maintenance and ancillary staff. They are welcoming and homely and are all decorated and furnished to a good standard with each house retaining its individuality and character. Boarders benefit from plenty of facilities including various common rooms, kitchens, ample showers and plenty of outdoor space. The quality of beds and mattresses has improved and all boarders have somewhere secure to lock personal items. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been met providing boarders with a better quality of living accommodation.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the school is underpinned by effective management and leadership from the headteacher and senior management team. The boarding staff are led well by the head of boarding and the team work well together ensuring boarders benefit from very good pastoral care. Policies and procedures are of a good standard providing staff with clear guidance. There are well developed arrangements to monitor the safety and welfare of boarders with clear record keeping, regular meetings and effective communication across the school.

There are suitable staffing levels ensuring the safe supervision of boarders at all times. The staff handbook and job descriptions ensure that everyone knows what is expected of them. Staff are supported well through induction and regular training opportunities to assist their development and succeed in meeting the schools objectives.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All boarders are seen as equal and their individuality is valued regardless of their age, gender, race and ability. Boarders with special welfare needs are supported well and there is a good quality of additional learning support. International students are welcome. There is effective

help for those who do not have English as a first language. There is a friendly school community and everyone is able to settle in well and make friends.