

Shrewsbury School

Inspection report for boarding school

Unique reference number	SC020779
Inspection date	25 November 2010
Inspector	Dawn Taylor / Martha Nethaway
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	18 January 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 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

Shrewsbury School was founded by Royal Charter in 1552 to serve as a school for boys in the town. It moved to its present site in 1882. In 2008 the co-educational sixth form was introduced, welcoming girls for the first time to Shrewsbury School.

There are 11 boys' boarding houses at Shrewsbury School, nine for boarders and two for day pupils, each accommodating about 60 boys between the ages of 13 to 18. Both day and boarding sixth form girls are accommodated in a single house, with a second due to open in 2011.

A large number of pupils come from Shropshire and adjacent counties, but others come from a wide geographical area across the United Kingdom. Just over a tenth of pupils come from families where English is not the principal language, some through a link with Shrewsbury International School, Bangkok.

Summary

Shrewsbury School was inspected over four days by two Ofsted inspectors and one boarding school additional inspector.

This inspection is a key inspection that looks at the key standards from the Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards and previous recommendations.

The overall outcome judgement for Shrewsbury School continues to be outstanding. Being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation are all judged to be outstanding. The previous recommendation is met.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

One recommendation was made at the last inspection to develop the parent medical consent form to include the administration of first aid and non-prescription medication. This has been met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The health and well-being of pupils are being effectively met because of excellent health provision, comprehensive policies and professional staff practice. The school has a dedicated health centre, which is well equipped and resourced with a team of doctors and four qualified school nurses. The quality of this provision is outstanding and ensures the day-to-day health needs of pupils are fully met. For example, the nursing team treat minor ailments and offer a comprehensive range of health promotion and prevention treatments. This service is further strengthened by pupil access to physiotherapy, a fitness trainer and a specialist dietetic nurse.

The school admissions process requires key health information and background medical histories, which includes consent for medical and first aid treatments. This means that any medical emergencies can be dealt with swiftly and without delay.

The quality of record keeping in the health centre is outstanding and ensures all medical needs are identified, monitored and addressed. However, recently introduced nursing audits have identified a shortfall in the storage and recording of the administration of medicines in the boarding houses. This gap is currently being addressed by the senior management team and health centre staff.

Pupils' health education is comprehensive. There is a detailed personal, health and social education curriculum (PSHE) that is tailored to each year group and is regularly reviewed and developed. This is delivered by a wide range of staff across site and includes external speakers. This is enhanced by the healthy lifestyle promoted by the school through an extensive sporting programme, a culture of healthy eating and the school's strong social values. This ensures pupils have the right information to make informed decisions about their future health and well-being.

The healthy diet of pupils is promoted by the school's commitment to providing an outstanding catering provision. This is delivered by a team of enthusiastic contracted staff. Pupils express real satisfaction with the quality of breakfast and lunchtime meals. All foods are locally sourced and used to produce nutritious and enticing meals. Pupils' cultural, religious and health needs are being fully met through the wide-ranging choice of meals on offer.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The risk of bullying or harm to any pupil is effectively minimised by an extensive number of proactive initiatives embraced by the school. There are detailed policies and procedures that are regularly reviewed and made available to all parents. These underpin comprehensive staff training and the PSHE curriculum. This ensures staff and pupils know how to act to ensure they are part of a safe, nurturing and responsible school community.

Staff sensitively support pupils to become responsible individuals. There are systems in place to manage inappropriate behaviour and respond to complaints. Pupils confirm that matters are dealt with fairly. The focus of intervention is always to educate and support those involved to develop their social and life skills. A pupil stated: 'Like all levels of society, if you follow the rules there is very little chance of being harmed and if you are bullied, the school has countless numbers of teachers who are trained to help.' One parent summed this up by saying: 'Within the house there is a lively family atmosphere with a healthy mixture of high jinks and camaraderie that we feel comes from the variety of ages in one house with fair and measured discipline.'

Pupils' safety is promoted by an established health and safety policy, which ensures risks are identified and appropriate action is taken to manage and reduce them. For example, there is excellent awareness among staff and pupils of the fire safety precautions. There are effective security systems in place across site, which include the employment of a security firm. Thorough risk assessments are in place and regularly reviewed and the meticulous visitors' policy, ensures adults who visit the boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised. This excellent practice ensures that pupils are appropriately safeguarded at all times.

The school continues to operate a robust staff vetting procedure. Staff recruitment files contain clear evidence of recruitment checks that have taken place prior to staff being employed. This includes an appropriate enhanced Criminal Record Bureau check.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils receive outstanding support with great emphasis placed on their pastoral, physical and spiritual care and education. Each pupil has a dedicated team of boarding staff who have direct responsibility for meeting their individual needs. This is enhanced by a wider network of professionals across the school site. These include a 'listening team' who provide excellent confidential counselling, tutors, who provide group and individual guidance, and pupil mentors, who support peers.

There are effective written records and plans, which contain key information on individual pupils. This is sensitively shared between departments and ensures the holistic needs of pupils are met. Where appropriate this includes comprehensive information from the learning support team and English as an additional language.

Pupils benefit from care that is open and inclusive. The school strongly promotes and celebrates the uniqueness of all pupils. Staff are skilled at building pupil identity, self-confidence and self-esteem. As a result they learn to respect and value the strengths of others and this enhances the school's inclusive community. All pupils' skills at whatever level are encouraged, praised and rewarded. For example, Shrewsbury School is proud of its sporting achievements and ensures pupils of all abilities have the same opportunity to play for a school team and have access to the top coaches.

The school encourages pupils to have an understanding of the wider community. People from the local area are invited into the school to key events, such as concerts and the lecture fasti, while pupils are involved out in the local community undertaking community service work at the local hospital, care homes, primary school and a homeless shelter.

Pupils also undertake a wide range of fundraising through events such as fashion shows, pop concerts, non-uniform days and sponsored events. The benefiting charities are all chosen by pupils and include teenage cancer, leukaemia, motor neurone disease and Shrewsbury House, a church youth club in Everton. Some of these causes have been supported by boarding houses and Shrewsbury School over a significant period of time and are close to the hearts of those involved.

The Christian faith plays an integral part of school life and all pupils attend Chapel services. The school's Chaplain is a member of the 'listening team' and delivers modules of the PSHE curriculum. He has a high profile in the boarding houses and offers support not only to pupils but also to families and staff. The school meets the needs of the international and diverse identities of all pupils and celebrates friendships, which enrich and enhance the boarding community.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The school is successfully achieving its aim 'to encourage pupils to become caring, thoughtful, confident members of society - ambitious yet not arrogant; perceptive and yet not precocious; interesting, interested and able to get on with people of all backgrounds'. The facilities and opportunities for pupils to enjoy and contribute to the life of the school are outstanding.

The induction of new pupils of all ages is a key strength of the school. They receive a warm and inclusive welcome by everyone and they quickly feel part of the community. This sensitive and caring approach is indicative of the ethos of the school. Pupils are positively encouraged to make the most of both their social and educational opportunities, which not only helps them become an active member of the school and their boarding house but also helps pupils new to the school settle in very quickly. All pupils experience and appreciate the school's family atmosphere and ideals, which can be clearly seen in the structure of the boarding houses. For example, all new third form pupils are allocated a mentor from the year above and the sixth form, who support them through the foundation fortnight. This also helps cement friendships that continue throughout the duration of their school life. One parent stated: 'My son has just started the school in September and from my point of view, the school has done a wonderful job helping him to get adjusted for a difficult transition by giving him enough support.'

Pupils are actively encouraged to contribute to the running of the school. There is an established school council, a quod (sixth form common room) committee and praepostors (prefect) group, which encourages discussions and enables pupils to feed points of view to the headteacher and senior management team. Pupils are also encouraged to have open discussions with boarding house staff and tutors and can influence change in the houses and across the school site. For example, changes have been made to the school menu, the school timetable, and lower school pupils now all carry school bags. This results in pupils feeling listened to and a valued part of the school community. Pupils state: 'For starts there is the school council who can usually deal with small things, however, if you are not completely satisfied with something you can talk to your housemaster who will always deal with it in the most reasonable way', and, 'you can talk to the housemaster and also with friends, you can tell matron, the school council and everyone's opinion is taken into consideration'.

The school works proactively in partnership with families and guardians to ensure they are part of the school community and that pupils' specific needs are met. There is a wide range of opportunities for parents to participate in such as fundraising, support matches and watch performances. Parents and guardians are always welcome to visit school and spend time with their children. Pupils can remain in contact with their families through email, phone and letter writing. Parents and guardians are appreciative of the excellent communication between school and home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The accommodation, grounds and facilities are outstanding at Shrewsbury School. There are 12 operational boarding houses with a 13th due to open in 2011. Nine are boys' boarding houses and two are for boy day pupils; each accommodates about 60 boys between the ages of 13 to 18. The day and boarding sixth form girls are accommodated in a single house, with a second currently being built. The pupils are proud of their houses and will strongly advocate that theirs is 'the best'. Each house has its own unique character but all are welcoming, comfortable and provide pupils with a safe, secure place to relax and be themselves.

These excellent facilities are enhanced by the school's commitment to employing dedicated teams of grounds, maintenance, laundry and auxiliary staff who work tirelessly to maintain this wonderful environment.

The school continues to meet the aims set out in the development plan. This provides a rolling programme of building and refurbishment work that ensures all accommodation and facilities are built and maintained to a high standard.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The organisation and management of this school ensure outstanding outcomes for pupils. The new headteacher and senior management team provide strong dynamic leadership, which results in consistent high standards and a vibrant boarding community.

The boarding house teams are energetic and enthusiastic. They have excellent relationships with the pupils and promote a warm, family atmosphere. Pupils state: 'It is a fantastic environment with great facilities and staff'; 'it has an amazing atmosphere and is full of great people'; 'it offers all I can wish for, it is improving me in every way and it can't offer me any more'; and 'I am extremely satisfied with Shrewsbury School and could not be happier.'

Housemasters, their spouses and assistant housemasters are inspiring role models and dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils while promoting the strong values and ethos of the school. Matrons are sensitive, skilled and greatly appreciated by the pupils who benefit from their nurturing parenting skills. Tutors provide motivation and support to pupils and conscientiously strive to help the individual to flourish and achieve their best. As a team they ensure every aspect of a pupil's potential is recognised and achieved. One parent stated: 'The pastoral care is exemplary. The staff generate a sense of community, which then expands in the mind of every pupil into a personal consideration for the rights of others. This is a "happy ship" and that is due to the lead given by the staff and the caring attitude that is instilled in the pupils.'

All staff are professional and dedicated to their personal development, which is supported by the school. They receive a comprehensive induction, regular supervision and annual appraisals. They are guided by comprehensive policies, procedures and guidance. Training events are frequent and staff comment positively on the quality of the courses.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school has a range of initiatives that celebrate the uniqueness of the individual. They have excellent awareness of equality of opportunity and always strive to provide outstanding services. A key development for the school over the last four years has been the introduction of co-education at sixth form level. Due to the care and diligence of the school there has been a seamless transition, which has enhanced the school community.

The monitoring of relevant records, such as the complaints, child protection and discipline logs, either by the second master or others ensures proper scrutiny of all aspects of the pupils' care so that if there are any difficulties these can be identified and addressed with the urgency they might merit. This quality monitoring and other similar initiatives contribute to periodic reports to the governing body and feed into the school development plan.

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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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 the development of systems to regularly monitor pupils' health care, the provision of that care and the maintenance of non NHS records in the boarding houses. (NMS 15.15)