

Moyles Court School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Clare Davies
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Date of last inspection	10 October 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

Moyles Court School is an independent co-educational boarding and day school for pupils from three to 16 years. There are approximately 170 pupils, 48 of whom board. The two boarding houses are located on the school site allowing boarders easy access to school resources, recreational facilities and grounds. The school is situated in a rural setting on the edge of the New Forest.

Summary

This was an announced inspection to assess Moyles Court School against the national minimum standards for boarding schools. The inspection of the education practice was undertaken by the Independent Schools Inspectorate at the same time and is reported upon separately.

There are good outcomes for boarders across all areas. The small boarding community offers a family environment and is appreciated by many families who are serving in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. There are clear policies and procedures in place relating to the safeguarding of boarders. All staff have received training on child protection matters and there are robust procedures for safer recruitment, ensuring all new staff are suitably checked before they start work. The boarding staff work well together to meet the pastoral needs of the boarders and qualified nurses ensure that health and medical needs are well met. Boarders enjoy their boarding experience where they feel happy and safe.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the school has ensured that the nurses have received training in child protection issues and parental consent has been sought for the administration of medication and treatment. There are sound procedures in place for the safer recruitment of staff.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Personal, social and health education is delivered formally through the school curriculum and throughout the boarding experience pupils are educated about personal hygiene, physical activity and healthy eating. The health and emotional wellbeing of boarders is managed well by boarding staff, nurses and teaching staff supported by sound policies and procedures.

Qualified nurses are available every morning of each school day offering medical care and guidance. Medication is stored securely and administered with clear records made. A single record is held for each boarder of any medication administered ensuring that a safe system is in place providing staff with clarity on what medication has been given and when. The storage of medication in the girls boarding house is secure but does not offer any privacy. There is a good working relationship with the local surgery and access to a doctor as required. The school obtains written parental consent to ensure that health care is provided in accordance with parents' wishes. Health needs for each boarder are identified and recorded as part of the admission process to the school. Information is shared with relevant people throughout the

school on a need to know basis for example where a child may have a food allergy, the catering team are informed of this. All school staff are trained in first aid and nurses undertake additional training to maintain their professional registration. There is a designated room in the main house for boarders who are ill. This room has an en-suite bathroom and a call bell system to summon assistance but it is not a very welcoming environment lacking the decoration, colour and warmth of the dormitories.

The catering team provide a varied and nutritious menu. Boarders report that the food has improved as a result of the school listening to their views collated in a school survey. Food remains a big talking point and boarders have more suggestions on how they feel it could be further improved. There is a range of options from hot meals to salad bar to jacket potatoes. A food committee has been formed and boarders have other forums to comment on the menus. Fruit is available after school and snacks are enjoyed at supper time in addition to personal tuck. The catering staff are trained in food hygiene and following the visit from the environmental health department there are no outstanding recommendations.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Procedures to guard against bullying are effective and clear guidelines given to staff and pupils. The pupil code of conduct places the emphasis on treating others as you would wish to be treated and not to hurt or disturb others. Boarders report that they do not feel bullying is an issue at Moyles Court School and on occasion when there is an incident it is dealt with by staff. A boarder reported, 'if you tell, they sort it out straight away'.

Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding issues and this has been supported by training delivered to all staff from a national charity dedicated to protecting children from harm. Collaborating with this national charity is a demonstration of the commitment from the school to ensure that safeguarding is given a high priority. The school has a policy on child protection and clear procedures for staff to follow if they should have concerns, the policy is available on the school website for parents to view. The staff code of conduct is a very comprehensive document promoting safe working practices.

The boarding handbook addresses behaviour through rights and responsibilities. These expectations are clearly listed and collectively provide simple rules. Minor breaches of responsibilities will result in community duties around the boarding house and anything more serious may result in loss of privileges such as free time, activity or tuck. Points can be rewarded for good community spirit and privileges awarded. Boarders were observed to behave exceptionally well with an awareness of the school's expectations and possible sanctions; generally sanctions are considered fair with most inappropriate behaviour receiving a sufficient warning negating the need to discipline further. Systems are in place to respond to any serious incidents of misbehaviour and appropriate records are maintained detailing liaison with parents.

The handbook for boarders and their parents provides details of the complaints procedure. Boarders are encouraged to talk to any member of staff with any concern or complaint they may have. Records are held of any formal complaints made. Good relationships amongst parents, boarders and the school assist with issues being resolved at an informal stage. The school carries out comprehensive recruitment of staff with robust vetting procedures to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. All staff have clearance through the Criminal Records Bureau

and references are received and verified before employment commences. There are effective systems to safely manage the presence of visitors to the school.

Health and safety matters are given high regard across the school. Staff and boarders are aware of the fire safety procedures and have experienced evacuating from the boarding areas. Equipment is regularly checked, a fire risk assessment is in place and staff receive training in fire safety. The school site is well maintained with a prompt response to reports of any maintenance issues. Risk assessments of the boarding environment are regularly reviewed and there are risk assessments for on site activities and more in-depth assessments for off site activities and trips away. Boarders are advised of safety issues such as; areas out of bounds, the fire procedures, security of the buildings and testing of electrical equipment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is a range of activities for boarders to choose from after school. These vary each term and provide opportunities in sports, computers, music, cooking, drama and a weekly youth club. The school grounds provide recreational space along with a sports hall, tennis courts and a sports field. Each boarding house has two common rooms for junior and senior boarders and there is a small communal area for the older boys and girls to socialise. The common rooms have a television with DVD players and access to some board games. Boarders are able to bring to school their own games consoles, musical instruments and music players. There is sufficient free time where boarders can freely move around the school site or spend time in their dormitories. The majority of the boarders, particularly the boys, enjoy the grounds and the opportunity to arrange a game of football. Some of the senior boarders would welcome a social event with another school to meet other young people of a similar age. At the weekends the school arranges local shopping trips and outings to leisure parks for different activities.

The pastoral care given to boarders is a strong feature of the school. Parents and staff describe 'a family environment' and this is created through the pastoral structure. Housemothers provide consistent care to boarders, supported by Gap students and nurses with overall support and supervision by the housemaster. The good behaviour of boarders and low level of incidents are indicative of happy children who feel secure in their surroundings. Teaching staff build up positive relationships with the pupils and the headmaster is visible around the school. Boarders report that they can approach the headmaster directly with any issues they may have. To ensure that boarders have several options of adults whom they can turn to with any concern there are independent listeners, male and female, whose contact details are published throughout the boarding houses.

Moyles Court School has a Christian foundation that welcomes pupils from other faiths. The school has equal opportunity policies and the celebration of difference is promoted through the curriculum, assemblies and general discussion. Pupils can receive support with their learning where required and the school ensures that all children have the chance to develop their individual strengths and abilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The school is developing ways of formal consultation with pupils and to date there has been a survey, a junior school council, a food committee and regular house meetings with boarders.

With the junior school council established into its second term there are now plans to instigate a senior council. Many boarders reported that they are able to give their views directly to the boarding staff, the housemaster and the headmaster. It is a strength that boarders feel able to approach staff directly in addition to the regular formal structure for gathering boarders views in house meetings. In response to listening to the views of boarders there have been changes to the menus, changes to the Sunday morning routine and a reduction in the use of bunk beds.

Boarders can contact family and friends by using their personal mobile telephones, accessing school email and using the school pay phones. There is one pay phone in each boarding house and this is insufficient for the amount of use in the evenings. The location of the pay phones does not offer any privacy and boarders would like this to be improved. Boarding staff are sensitive to allow the use of the school phone in a private location when they are aware of a personal matter. Many parents are in Her Majesty's Armed Forces and maintaining contact as they are posted outside of the United Kingdom is very important. Boarding staff encourage and support boarders to write letters using airmail to their families abroad. Parents report that they receive good communication from the school about their children and can easily speak with boarding and nursing staff.

New boarders have the opportunity to visit and sleep overnight before becoming a full boarder. If preferred, the number of boarding nights can gradually increase at a pace comfortable to the pupil and their parents. Some parents report how they appreciate this flexibility allowing the child and the rest of the family to adjust to boarding routines. The new boarders described how they were made to feel welcome and how other boarders were assigned to help and show them around. The handbook provides practical information and the boarding staff give additional information about boarding slowly to ensure that the new boarders do not become overwhelmed.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There are two boarding houses; a separate building for girls and the boarding area for boys is integral to the main building above classrooms. The boarding houses are generally in good decorative order with suitable furniture and fittings. Boarders report that they like their dormitories and can personalise their space with choice of duvet cover, posters and photographs. There is some lockable storage provided, boarders report that they feel their belongings are respected by others. Common rooms provide comfortable seating with televisions and the ability to watch films. The toilet and washing facilities are satisfactory with some more modern than others. Boarders are comfortable in their boarding accommodation; it is warm and welcoming with photographs displaying activities and events the boarders have been involved in. Repairs and maintenance issues are promptly dealt with.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school prospectus and handbook provides an insight into the ethos and structure of the school and the facilities it offers. Additional information is available on the school website. The housemaster provides good leadership of the boarding provision supported well by the housemothers, gap students and nurses. Boarding staff feel supported in doing their job and their dedication to the boarders shines through. Communication amongst staff within the school is very good and the housemaster reports regularly to the head and members of the senior management team. There are systems in place to monitor the safety and welfare of the pupils.

The staff handbooks provide clear guidance on expectations alongside the school's policies and procedures. Boarding staff receive regular training in safeguarding matters, first aid and fire safety; performance reviews are held within a system of staff appraisal.

Boarders respond well to the structure and enjoy their boarding experience at Moyles Court School. There are good levels of supervision, staffing is sufficient in number for the boarders' needs and boarders know where to locate an adult during the night if required.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Personal support systems are equally available to all boarders and the family environment supports inclusion with positive relationships amongst different year groups. Boarders have access to male and female staff and a choice of doctor and independent listeners. Awareness of the wider world is promoted through supporting local, national and international charities. Links with a children's home in Kenya fosters an awareness of inequality and difference. Pupils are encouraged to write to the children in Kenya and send donations of gifts and money raised through events. To raise awareness of disability the school has arranged for a visiting speaker to discuss the use of dogs helping people with disabilities.

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

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

- move the storage of medication in the girls boarding house to provide privacy when administering (NMS 15)
- ensure that the designated sick bay is decorated to the same standard as the dormitories (NMS 16)
- increase the availability of telephones for boarders' use and ensure that there is privacy (NMS 19).