

North London Grammar School

110 Colindeep Lane, London NW9 6HE

Inspection dates	04/10/2016 to 06/10/2016	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The boarding provision is good because

- Children make excellent progress in their educational, moral, social and cultural development.
- The head of boarding provides good leadership and guidance to staff and children.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership which sets the ethos of respect for others, and a drive for academic excellence and progress in personal and spiritual development for children.
- The boarding house is modern and comfortable, providing a safe environment for children.
- Staff support children to develop an understanding of British culture, diversity and respect for others.
- Staff have excellent safeguarding policies and training which they apply positively with the children, enhancing their safety in school, online and in the wider community.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all health and safety checks and monitoring are included in a single document which specifies the frequency of testing.
- Implement the planned staff supervision and appraisal scheme for boarding staff and ensure that all supervision sessions are appropriately recorded.
- Ensure that the record of complaints includes the resolution and a comment on this by the complainant.

Information about this inspection

The inspector contacted the school at 9am on 4 October 2016 and met with the senior leadership team at 1.45pm. During the inspection, the inspector met with: children in boarding and school; boarding staff; parents; teachers; governors; a guardian; a recent leaver from boarding; and those with responsibility for safeguarding, data management, health and safety, and staff recruitment records. There was ongoing contact with the local safeguarding team. Activity during the inspection included: meals taken with children; a tour with children; meetings with groups of children and observation of activities; and checking of records, including progress and attainment, health and safety, medical and recruitment, and policies and procedures.

Inspection team

Angus Mackay

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

This private, non-denominational international school can provide education for up to 300 children and young people, with boarding accommodation for 23. Educational and living accommodation is in modern buildings located in Barnet, North London. Since the inspection of education on 27 to 29 November 2013, the school has become a selective grammar school. There are some mixed-ability classes, in the upper school, of students who had been admitted prior to this change.

During this inspection, there were 167 children in school and 21 in the single, modern boarding house. The boarding house is accessible for wheelchair users and has appropriate resources for children with a physical disability. This is the first inspection of the boarding house and the care provided to children living there.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

The boarding setting is valued in the school, and is well organised and effectively managed. Staff receive informal support from the head of boarding and some training to give them the basic skills necessary for their role. The headteacher includes the boarding setting in the school development plan, and the head of boarding is part of the senior leadership team. During the inspection, the headteacher took swift and effective action to enhance the service by addressing any identified shortfalls, including training and development activities.

Children have excellent relationships with staff. They accept guidance from them and respond positively to the ethos of the boarding house. All children talked about respect for others, sharing and helping each other. They are learning about British values, respect for others, understanding of feelings and emotions, and applying this learning in their life in the boarding setting.

Some boarders make exceptional progress in education. Others are progressing well and, in particular those with English as a second language, are improving their competency in English. Boarders benefit from the structure and support in boarding to enhance their learning in school. One parent said of his son, 'He has only been in boarding for three weeks and he has improved so much. He is coming home and thinking about homework. Of course, being in boarding has helped with his schoolwork. He has a programme and structure, which is helpful.'

Boarders enjoy the residential experience, and they enjoy the activities and friendships that it offers. They use the opportunities to join in cultural events, including trips to the theatre, museums and architectural places of beauty. They use these experiences to enhance their learning and use of English, and for fun. Staff in boarding and in the school use all activities as learning opportunities to monitor their impact on children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Staff monitor and evaluate children's progress using the whole-school behavioural database

Boarders have an active voice in the development of the setting. Staff listen to them, and use complaints and feedback to help to set development targets for the boarding house. This has resulted in a number of positive changes in the setting. In addition, the boarders choose one of their number to represent their views on the school council. They take this appointment seriously, learning responsibility, and developing confidence and negotiation skills.

Boarders maintain contact with world events primarily through news programmes on radio or television. This recently led them to raise funds for charities to help refugees and the support services aiding them. They raised a significant sum in a short time to show their support practically for others in need. Children develop a sense of community and caring for others through these acts.

The boarding house is a comfortable, modern facility. Children like the accommodation, particularly the shared living spaces and bedrooms. The headteacher is committed to

improving the setting and driving up standards. This includes further expansion of the boarding setting to allow more children to benefit from the positive impact that the residential experience has on children's attainment and progress.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

The head of boarding, boarding staff and children share the school's aspirations for excellence in education, and progression in personal development and understanding of British culture. Staff use all activities as opportunities for discussion and further learning. Consequently, children make tracked progress in addressing complex areas of personal development. Children and parents can explain the ethos of the school, and have the same aspirations for educational excellence and moral development. Children make excellent progress from their starting points in education and personal development. The head of boarding works closely with senior staff in the school to ensure that activities in the boarding setting support and enhance the school programme. Consequently, children in boarding make excellent tracked progress from their starting points.

Staff prepare children who are coming into boarding or leaving it for their new experience. Parents say that there is a good induction, where the head of boarding gathers information to aid the integration of their child into boarding. Those leaving gain advice from staff about their next move and guidance on appropriate college courses. One student, who left last term, said, 'I saw that staff wanted us all to achieve. Their ambitions for us made me more ambitious. They helped me to choose a college to go to.'

Boarding accommodation is modern, comfortable and well maintained. Children say that they like their rooms and enjoy sharing them with others. Some personalise their space in the shared room and others receive staff encouragement to do this. They have lockable cabinets and cupboards to keep personal possessions safe. In a shared refrigerator, they store personally marked snacks which remain safe and untouched. One boarder said, 'We respect each other, so we would not take something that belongs to someone else.'

Meals are plentiful and offer healthy choices of culturally appropriate food. Children can opt for a different meal and there is a choice of salad and fruit to accompany each main meal. Children say that they enjoy the meals and can influence what is on the menu. Following representations from the boarders, there is a fresh-water purifier in the boarding house. One parent said that his son had told him, 'I like the food, but the water is delicious.'

The head of boarding manages healthcare effectively. Most boarders register with a local general practitioner, dentist and optician. However, parents can choose for them to remain with their home services, if they are relatively close. Medication is securely stored, appropriately recorded and issued. Where the head of boarding believes a boarder to be competent, they can manage their own medication. The head of boarding assesses the risk of this process, and monitors the safe storage and use of the course of medication. This encourages boarders to take responsibility for themselves and develop a mature response to their own care.

Children treat each other and staff with respect and understanding. Boarders come from

a wide range of ethnic, cultural and national backgrounds. They say that they value the diversity in boarding and enjoy learning about other cultures. Some children do follow their religion, but others do not and all show respect for each other. Staff use activities to embed spiritual values. They creatively use discussions, films and activities to help children to explore personal values and beliefs, and their understanding of human feelings and emotions. Staff record and analyse these events for their effectiveness and impact on children's education and personal development. One parent commented on the reasons for choosing this school: 'For us, academic results come before religion. We think that there are certain values which all religions teach: being respectful; caring for others; and accepting difference. It is the values which we wanted. Concentrate on the similarities rather than the differences – respect and truthfulness are what are important in children's upbringing.'

Boarders and their parents trust the boarding staff and say that they provide good advice and guidance. Parents are particularly confident in the head of boarding and the accessible contact point that he provides for them. All boarders are also aware that there is an independent listener whom they can contact if they wish to receive support from someone outside the school. They are also able to maintain good contact with their parents and friends using a variety of electronic media.

Boarders join in a range of fun and educational activities. These vary from board games, shopping and sporting activities to cultural events. The staff encourage boarders to build on work in the school to develop a sense of British culture and values through trips and discussion. Staff carefully monitor the impact that these activities have on children, producing detailed reports on the additional learning. Staff use these opportunities to reinforce learning in areas, including: understanding and respecting diversity; participating and understanding cultural events; preparing for life in modern Britain; and understanding and appreciating difference. The children build friendships and confidence through these activities. One parent commented that his son had been in boarding for only three weeks and had initially been reluctant to go. He had now asked to remain in boarding for the weekend rather than return home. His father said, 'He likes the social activities, which he would not do at home. At home, he was not going out at all and becoming unhealthy. It is good to see him becoming more active and joining in things.'

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Senior staff completed a review of the safeguarding policy in September 2016, following training by the local authority. The policy is comprehensive, accessible and well written. It provides clear guidance on current and emerging threats to children, and good guidance to all in identifying these and actions to support the child. The policy includes detailed guidance on the actions to follow, with good contacts listed. It includes guidance on how to address concerns about other staff, including the headteacher. The education officer from the local safeguarding team who conducted the training said, 'Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and were very engaged in the training. They came up with good, probing questions. I was impressed with them and their ethos.' Staff apply this training to their work with children, enhancing their safe care and providing early support when they see warning signs.

The school has a comprehensive whistleblowing policy which is largely in line with government guidelines. The policy differentiates between matters included in the staff

code of conduct, such as grievance procedures, and what matters are qualifying disclosures, as explained in the guidance. The policy had one line different from the government guidance which potentially restricted the range of issues covered by it. During the inspection, the headteacher changed this so that the wording is identical to that suggested in the government guidelines. This change enhances the scope of the policy and ensures that it is compatible with national guidance.

The headteacher maintains a detailed single central record of staff recruitment checks. All staff have enhanced disclosure and barring service checks, and most other checks that are outlined in the keeping children safe in education guidance. Two staff have not been able to obtain certificates of good conduct or other verification from their home countries. The headteacher has ensured that all other checks, including that verified references, are in place for these staff to ensure children's safety. A member of staff trained in safer recruitment is on every recruitment panel. However, none of the governors, other than the headteacher, have completed training in safer recruitment. A parent governor completed this training during the inspection, enabling the appropriate recruitment of senior posts in the school.

The boarding setting has suitable risk assessments of activities, enabling children to take age-appropriate risks. This allows them to engage in a wide range of activities which provide experiences including fun, challenge and recreation. This assists in building confidence and engagement with the wider community, and aids their social development.

The boarding team reinforces the safety messages contained in the broad range of e-safety policies. This includes a good guide for children on how to stay safe. It is comprehensive and includes contacts inside and outside the school who can help. The policy reinforces the message that the victim is not to blame, and describes the legal and emotional protection available. The school also provides a helpful, well-written policy with good, simple-to-follow guidelines for parents. One child said, 'We get reminded all of the time about safety, e-safety in particular.' Another said, 'We did sessions about cyber-bullying, different forms of bullying, radicalisation and child sexual abuse.' Staff ensure that children abide by appropriate boundaries and learn how to use information technology safely, and stay safe in the wider community.

Children's behaviour during the inspection was exemplary. They showed respect for one another and listened patiently to differing points of view. All children stressed the positive ethos in the boarding house, in particular the acceptance of difference in culture, religion or race. One young person said, 'We should respect and help one another. We are going to do a talk, using PowerPoint, on tolerance and respect to get everyone in boarding talking about them.'

Staff use a range of interventions to encourage positive behaviour. Children have targets which the head of boarding monitors, ensuring fairness and appropriate support for children to aid their progress. Staff operate a rewards and sanctions programme similar to that used in the school, and feed information into the shared behavioural database. The system is a fair and effective means of encouraging positive behaviour and learning. One child said, 'Staff are good to us and I think sanctions are fair.'

The headteacher and head of boarding ensure that appropriate health and safety measures are in place to provide children with a safe environment. The head of boarding and site manager conduct all the appropriate safety testing and checks, as required. However, the health and safety policy and fire risk assessment are not always specific about who is responsible for conducting tests or what their frequency is. Although this information is contained in other documents, such as the fire test book, this potentially weakens the effectiveness of the relevant risk assessments and policies designed to ensure a safe environment.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The headteacher has established a positive culture and ethos in the school and boarding setting. All staff and children share the drive for academic excellence and the development of respect and celebration of diversity. The leadership of the school values boarding and views it as a key element in the delivery of a good education to children. The head of boarding is an active member of the senior leadership team, contributing to the overall development of the school. Staff and children ensure that the statement of boarding principles and practice is a true reflection of the boarding service. In particular, children and staff successfully create an ethos of understanding of others, celebrating cultural and religious diversity.

The board of governors has developed from a small steering group to a more formal and highly engaged board of governors. The board is representative of the local community and includes members with skills essential to the development of the whole setting. The headteacher includes reports on the boarding setting in his school development plan that is agreed by the governors. The board does not have a member with responsibility for boarding and is looking to recruit someone with the necessary skills and knowledge to aid the development of the residential setting.

The head of boarding provides effective leadership to the staff team and drives the culture of educational progress, respect and valuing diversity. He has completed a range of appropriate courses, enabling him to be one of the school's designated officers and to recruit staff safely. The School Improvement Plan includes provision for the head of boarding to undertake an appropriate boarding management course to further enhance his knowledge and skills.

The head of boarding provides help and guidance to the team of supervisors. This includes a suitable induction to boarding and a relevant level 2 qualification. However, supervision is informal and unrecorded, which impedes the evidencing of progression and development in the staff team. Moreover boarding staff do not have annual appraisals. The headteacher and head of boarding responded to this shortfall during the inspection, ensuring that appraisals commenced and that a helpful format for recording supervision was created.

Boarding staff provide a caring service to children. Parents say that they trust them and that they encourage their children to excel in school. Staff complete an induction and are familiar with the school policies, ethos and code of conduct. They provide appropriate care and control within the boarding house. Children liaise with them about the positive use of leisure time. Children did keep in touch using telephones. During the inspection,

the head of boarding modified the signing-out sheet to ensure that it accurately shows where children are going and when they return, enhancing their safe care.

Children are familiar with the complaints procedure and have used it to improve the boarding setting effectively. The head of boarding also analysed the children's responses to the Ofsted survey, in particular where they indicated unhappiness with the setting. The head of boarding used this in discussion with the children and responded positively to their concerns. Children confirmed that this had resulted in a range of improvements and a relaxation of some strict boundaries on access to electronic equipment. The internal recording of complaints notes that the head of boarding has addressed them, but does not record the outcomes in helpful detail. Children confirm that the complaints system is fair and effective, and does allow them an active voice in the development of the boarding service.

The boarding house has prefects who undergo training and induction to their role. Training includes safeguarding and familiarisation with relevant policies and procedures to spot and address issues such as bullying, radicalisation or vulnerability. One prefect from last year said that prefects have no direct role in managing behaviour, but encourage studiousness and respect for others. One of the children said, 'They are our role models. We look up to them and aspire to be like them.'

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number

<School URN>

Social care unique reference number

SC485109

DfE registration number

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school

Boarding school

Number of boarders on roll

21

Gender of boarders

Male

Age range of boarders

11 to 16

Headteacher

Date of previous boarding inspection

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