

Cheltenham College Junior School

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Wendy Anderson
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Address	Cheltenham College Junior School Thirlestaine Road CHELTENHAM Gloucestershire GL53 7AB
Telephone number	01242 522697
Email	ccjs@cheltcoll.glocs.sch.uk
Registered person	Scott Bryan
Head / Principal	Scott Bryan
Nominated person	
Date of last inspection	20 October 2010

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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

Cheltenham College Junior School is an independent day and boarding school for pupils aged three to 13 years. It was founded in 1863 as a boarding and preparatory school for boys. In 1993 the school became co-educational. There are 425 pupils of whom 40 are either full-time or flexi-boarders. The boarding house comprises the first and second floors of the main building. The school is set within 15 acres of woodland with its own lake, sports fields and numerous playgrounds. The school is situated within easy access to the centre Cheltenham and its many facilities.

Summary

This key inspection was aligned with the inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher. The school provides boarders with an outstanding standard of care. Boarders are looked after by a very experienced staff team who continue to review and update their practice to ensure boarders are safe, happy and live in a nurturing and stimulating environment. There are robust systems in place, which are adhered to, to support the staff team which include a comprehensive guide on boarding practice. The school's core values of respect, kindness, honesty, forgiveness, commitment and responsibility are clearly present in the day-to-day work at the school. The boarders at the school are a pleasure to spend time with and a credit to themselves and the school. Their behaviour is exceptional. Boarders are very positive about their life at the school and the staff that care for them.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

All of the recommendations made at the last inspection have been implemented. Medication in the medical centre is stored in a purpose-built medical cabinet which is securely fixed to the wall. The information provided for boarders and their parents on the school's complaint procedure has been revised and now includes the contact details for Ofsted. The school has reviewed its systems for the recruitment and appointment of staff and these are now fully robust. Gap year students have been provided with their own toilet and washing facilities.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' health is exceptionally well promoted. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme is comprehensive and provides excellent information, discussion and work on all aspects of a healthy life style and staying safe including child protection issues. This programme is delivered in an age appropriate manner. This is supported by robust policies and procedures detailing the school's response to alcohol, smoking and substance abuse. Both the PSHE programme and supporting policies are frequently reviewed and updated.

The boarders' health records are comprehensive and very well maintained. The school nurses review the information they hold on boarders' medical requirements on a termly basis to ensure all information is current and accurate, including any medication boarders may be taking. They are responsible for ensuring that information on boarders' medical conditions, needs, allergies

and intolerances is provided to all those staff who require this and again there is a system for reviewing and updating these people on a termly basis or sooner if required. All information is stored securely and only shared on a need to know basis.

Boarders receive a high quality health care and support from the school, its nurses, the staff and the local GP. The GP holds frequent surgeries at the school and boarders can also access them at their surgery where school staff will support the boarders. There are arrangements for boarders to have access to either a male or female GP. The system for the administration of medication is very robust with excellent communication between the nurses at the school medical centre and the boarding staff. There is also a robust system in place for the monitoring of the medical records including the administration of medication. Comprehensive information on boarders health and personal problems is contained within the welfare plans, which are regularly reviewed and updated. The support provided by the special educational needs department is excellent which implements robust plans for individual boarders. Staff at the school have in depth knowledge of the boarders in their care this enables them to identify any signs of stress, concern or difficulties a boarders may be having.

The accommodation at the medical centre for ill boarders is of a good standard. This is only used during the day. If they are able to ill boarders will go home or they can be accommodated within the boarding house if required. There are clear arrangements for areas of the boarding house to be used as isolation accommodation when needed. All the sick rooms have call systems in place. Boarders said they were very well cared for when ill. They said the staff who looked after them kind and caring.

Catering at the school is excellent. Boarders have a very wide choice of both hot and cold foods at meal-times and are encouraged to put forward ideas for menus. Staff, including catering staff, sensitively monitor that boarders are eating a healthy diet. Meal-times are pleasant social occasions which staff and boarders share. Throughout the school there is good provision of drinking water and snacks including a variety of fruit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are kept safe by the implementation of excellent policies and procedures on staying safe, anti-bullying, complaints, behaviour management, staff recruitment, fire, security and adult access to boarders' accommodation. Boarders said that bullying was not an issue at the school and that if this did happen staff would deal with it very quickly, discreetly and work with all boarders involved. This was supported by the policies and records of incidents. The anti-bullying policy includes excellent information on cyber bullying and this is also covered with boarders in the PSHE programme. The school is an inclusive community based on the core values of respect, kindness, honesty, forgiveness, commitment and responsibility.

All staff receive excellent training in safeguarding at appropriate levels. Key staff attend training with the local safeguarding children's board with whom they have established robust links. A briefing is also given to the prefects and all boarders interviewed were clear on the role of the designated child protection officer and who they were. Comprehensive records are kept of any incident and this includes any pupil who goes missing without authority. Those staff who are involved in recruitment have also been trained in safer recruitment procedure. The staff records contain all the required information, including those files of the gap year students. Two reference seen were addressed 'to who it may concern'; these are not sufficiently robust. The school has

an agreement in place which is signed by those adults who live on site but not employed by the school as required.

The school has clear expectations of the standard of behaviour they expect from the boarders. Throughout the inspection the boarders' behaviour was exceptional. The main focus at the school is on reinforcing positive behaviour and linking behaviour to the school's core values. Boarders said that the debit and sanction system at the school is fair and that there are no debits in the boarding house as it is like home. Prefects at the school are seen as role models and are clear on their roles and responsibilities. They are involved in a current review of the credit and debit system at the school.

Fire prevention systems at the school are excellent with regular checks on equipment being carried out at the required intervals. Boarders were clear on actions to be taken should the fire alarm sound as they have regular fire drills at different times of the day. The health and safety policies and procedures are very robust and this includes an excellent annual audit of health and safety across the school. This is supported by a robust risk assessment process. Risk assessments are seen as 'live' documents by the staff team and are frequently reviewed and updated. Security at the school is very good and includes security guard patrols. Boarders said that they felt very safe at the school. Boarders' accommodation is for their sole use. Any contractors that access the boarding house are supervised.

Boarders' privacy is respected with boarders having lockable storage for personal belongings. They are also able to request staff to look after items, such as passports, and these are signed in and out.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders at the school have access to an excellent range of activities and they are encouraged to put forward ideas and requests for further activities. They also have access to exceptional recreational areas both inside and out. The grounds of the school are well maintained. The lounges, one for boys and one for girls, in the boarding house are welcoming, cosy and well furnished. The house parents have opened up their lounge to the boarders so that both genders can have social time together. There is a wide range of books, games, DVDs and toys for the boarders to use. Boarders also access clubs in the local community such as dance classes and the school has its own scout and brownie troops.

Boarders receive excellent support from staff who care for them and this is one of the main strengths of the boarding provision. Staff ensure they have in-depth knowledge of the boarders in their care. This ensures that staff are sensitive to any areas of concerns or stress the boarder may be experiencing. Boarders have access to an independent listener and a school counsellor, to whom they may refer.

The school is an inclusive community where differences are welcomed, valued and celebrated. Anti-discrimination and equal opportunities are at the heart of the school's core values and are evident throughout the school's policies, procedures and documentation. Overseas boarders said that they were made to feel very welcome at the school. There is evidence of the school supporting boarders from different faiths and observing their faiths' celebrations. These celebrations have not just been for those boarders of the faith, but for the whole school community. During the inspection the school had an 'India day' which was an excellent learning

and sharing experience for all. Boarders from whom English is not their first language receive excellent support.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are encouraged and enabled to contribute to the day-to-day boarding life at the school. Boarders said that they felt listened to and that where possible their ideas are taken up. The school is in the process of electing a school council. At this time the prefects are acting as the school council. Boarders also regularly complete a questionnaire to provide the school with feedback on life in the boarding house.

Boarders are able to keep in touch with their family and friends using mobile phones, email and skype. There are also pay phones in the boarding house and they can use the office phones if they wish. Where boarders parents live overseas in different time zones arrangements are made for contact at convenient times. Boarders and parents sign up to the school's ICT and mobile phone contract. This clearly details the school's expectations and code of conduct.

The school has a thorough induction process for new boarders. This includes making contact with them prior to their arrival, receiving post cards from the house parents, sending them photos of those staff who will be caring for them and the young person who has been allocated as their 'buddy'. Boarders said they found all of this very welcoming.

Boarders and staff relationships are excellent and a major strength of the boarding provision. The staff are very enthusiastic and dedicated to ensuring the boarders receive the best possible care. Boarders all spoke very positively of the staff who care for them saying that staff are 'fantastic, fun, kind caring' and 'its like having another set of parents'. They also said that staff always make time for them, always listen and are interested in what they are doing and saying.

Boarders have age appropriate access to the local community. They also have access to television and local and national newspapers. Periodicals are available at the library and boarders can request their favourite publications.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The boarding house accommodation is well lit, heated, furnished and ventilated. It provides boarders with a clean, homely, warm, comfortable environment in which to live. There are lots of pictures on the wall of current boarders as well as helpful information on the notice boards. The dormitories are well furnished and comfortable and provide boarders with enough storage space for their possessions. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their bed space with posters and photos of home. All boarders have lockable storage for personal belongings. The dormitories are appropriately separated by gender and age. Within the boarding house there are sufficient toilet and bathing facilities for the number of boarders accommodated. Staff and gap year students have their own facilities. The boarding house is decorated to a good standard and it is well maintained.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school provides boarders and their parents with excellent information which clearly outlines the school's boarding principals, practice and core values. Boarders said they found this information very helpful.

There is excellent leadership and management of the boarding provision. The boarding staff are very experienced and committed to the boarders and the school. The boarding staff said that the house parents were exceptional providing outstanding support for the boarding team and the boarders. The organisation of the boarding house clearly enhances and contributes to the boarders' welfare. There is a robust and effective system for monitoring and reviewing all records within the boarding house.

The supervision of boarders by staff is excellent and carried out with sensitivity. There is no evidence of there being any times during the terms when staff cover is insufficient. Boarders said that staff are always 'out and about the boarding house joining in what is going on'. Boarders also said they always know who is on duty and where and how to contact staff at night.

The boarding team have detailed job descriptions which reflect their current roles. There is a robust training programme for staff which begins with a comprehensive induction programme. Staff receive training within the school and access training from the Boarding Schools Association. The staff training is supported by an excellent staff guidance book on boarding. This is frequently reviewed and updated to reflect current practice. There is a bi-annual performance review which does include a boarding element but this does not include enough detail on the excellent boarding practice.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. It is evident throughout all of the schools policies, documentation and work that they truly follow their core values of respect, kindness, honesty, forgiveness, commitment and responsibility.

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 that personnel references are not addressed 'to whom it may concern' (NMS 38)
- ensure that the bi-annual performance review of boarding staff expands to fully represent the work undertaken. (NMS 34)