

Shaftesbury School

Shaftesbury School, Salisbury Road, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8ER

Inspection dates

3 to 4 March 2021

Context of the inspection

This monitoring visit was carried out because Ofsted has not visited this boarding school since October 2017. In addition, the inspector wanted to review concerns raised by children to Ofsted in surveys. This includes concerns about bullying, the quality of meals and Wi-Fi restrictions.

Inspectors visited the school to meet with children and staff in person. The review of records and additional interviews took place remotely.

Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and head of boarding have been appointed. In the short time since their appointment, they have identified areas in the boarding provision that need improving. This includes a review of the actions taken to meet the recommendations made at the last inspection in 2017, the maintenance of the boarding environment and the recording of safeguarding concerns. These improvements have been formalised into a development plan.

In January 2021, the new senior leaders took on the responsibilities of designated safeguarding leads for the school. Since their appointment, they have identified that the current safeguarding recording system is complex and requires improvement. However, their audit of safeguarding concerns has not identified errors in records. For example, that not all records detail all actions taken and the outcome. Senior leaders have confirmed that, since their appointment, there have not been any safeguarding concerns in the boarding provision.

Children spoken to confirmed that they feel safe, enjoy boarding, and they can identify an adult who they can speak to if they have any concerns or worries. Children confirmed that the Wi-Fi signal is good. However, they are not happy with the current restriction filters in place. Senior leaders are aware of this and are reviewing the appropriateness of sites that children have asked to access. Children said that incidents of bullying in the boarding provision are rare and that, when they do occur, the boarding staff take immediate action. Leaders and managers have taken appropriate action to address bullying behaviour. Children told the inspectors that, overall, the quality of food has improved. However, in their view, further improvement is required to the choices available.

Consultation meetings with children are not used effectively and require improvement. They do not take place regularly and children's attendance is varied. Records of these meetings are not of a good quality. They do not consistently detail discussions held, the actions taken or the outcome.

Senior leaders know that the current maintenance provision is insufficient to address the maintenance issues in the boarding provision. A tour of the boarding house identified that limited work has been completed to meet the recommendations raised at the last inspection in 2017. The head of boarding has recently compiled a development plan to address essential works. This plan has been presented to senior leaders for authorisation.

In response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, staffing bubbles were formed in the boarding provision. As a result, children benefit from being cared for by a small and consistent team of staff. Positive recognition of how the school has managed the pandemic was confirmed by parents who contributed to this monitoring visit. Most parents commented positively on how well the boarding staff communicate with them and said that their child enjoys boarding.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:

- Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for children is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any children with restricted mobility. (National minimum standard 5.4)
- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (National minimum standard 13.8)
- Children are actively encouraged to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Children are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. (National minimum standard 17.1)

Inspection team

Sharron Escott	Lead Social Care Inspector
Wendy Anderson	Social Care Inspector

Information about this school

Shaftesbury School is a co-educational academy catering for approximately 1000 students aged 11 to 18 years. At the time of the inspection, the school had 66 children, the majority being international students. The children are accommodated at Barton Hill House which is situated a short walk from the main school site. The school is located in Shaftesbury, Dorset. The last inspection of the boarding provision took place in May 2017.

School details

Unique reference number	140898
Social care unique reference number	SC042320
DfE registration number	838/4511

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.

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Type of school	Boarding School
Number of children on roll	104
Gender of children	Mixed
Age range of children	11 to 18
Headteacher	Donna London-Hill
Date of previous boarding inspection	16/05/2017
Telephone number	01747 854498
Email address	office@shaftesburyschool.co.uk

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