

Sexeys School

Sexey's School

Cole Road, Bruton, Somerset BA10 0DF

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Sexey's School is part of a multi-academy trust. The school provides education for children from the age of 11 to 18. The boarding accommodation is currently provided in two houses which are located on the school site. At the time of the visit, there were 120 boarders. Boarding is offered on a full time and part time basis. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 July 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 8 November 2021

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This boarding provision provides an inclusive and welcoming place for boarders to enjoy new opportunities and to make new friends. Staff create a positive community for boarders to belong to. The behaviour of boarders embodies the school values of kindness, politeness and friendliness.

Boarders enjoy their boarding experience. They speak enthusiastically and thoughtfully about the benefits of boarding. They would recommend it to others. Boarders enjoy a wide range of different activities, sports clubs and creative opportunities. Staff encourage boarders to plan group trips. Some boarders say they have tried new experiences they never thought they would do. Some boarders attend local sports clubs. As a result of consultation with students, part time boarders can book in to attend the fun weekend activities provided.

New boarders enjoy taster sessions where they can sleep over and find out about life in boarding. Existing boarders provide reassurance and kindness to those who might be nervous to stay away from home.

Boarders are mostly positive about the food. They feel there is a good range of meals, and that they can have a say about changes to the menu. Breakfast is many boarders highlight of the week, with different cooked options each day.

Staff understand boarders medical needs and ensure safe storage systems with efficient recording processes. The health team communicates well with boarding staff, they offer advice and guidance as needed.

Effective communication exists between boarding and teaching staff. This provides a holistic view of each boarder, ensuring important information is shared about their wellbeing and focus. Staff monitor and track the progress of boarders compared to day pupils. Boarders make good progress. They leave school to pursue their chosen careers or university courses. Those who leave at the end of year 11 go on to other further education opportunities.

Feedback from parents is mixed. Many parents speak favourably of boarding and the opportunities it affords their children. They value the range of activities and the inclusiveness created by diverse boarder backgrounds. Other parents are less positive. Difficulties with communication is a common theme. Parents do not always feel they can get in touch with the person they need to or receive a timely response.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. There are effective systems for reporting, monitoring and tracking concerns. The designated safeguarding lead is confident at identifying risk and knows when to seek external advice and/or make

referrals. Staff understand the types of risks boarders may be exposed to, and ensure appropriate support is in place. At the core of this are the relationships staff develop with boarders. Because of those relationships, boarders will share worries, whether about themselves or others, with staff.

Boarders feel safe in the school and say staff will help them if they have any worries or concerns. Staff record and share concerns, ensuring parents are aware of what is happening. Boarders say they like this, as it allows their parents to also check on them. Staff use restorative approaches to support positive behaviour. School leaders recognise the importance of celebrating boarders' achievements and positive behaviours.

Boarders receive support from a pastoral team who they say is approachable. Resources help boarders with a range of important issues, such as healthy relationships, substance misuse or sexual health. The pastoral team identify boarders needs and seek external support when required.

Closed circuit television (CCTV) is used in the boarding houses. Boarders understand why this is used. However, there is misinformation that circulates about the functionality, leading them to think it impedes more on their privacy than it does. Senior staff maintain logs to capture when footage is viewed. However, it is not always clear how the rationale for viewing footage fits within the stated policy.

The school maintains an accurate single central register, capturing adults who live on site who do not work at the school. Safer recruitment processes are used to recruit staff.

Appropriate health and safety arrangements are in place to ensure boarders' safety when on site.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The headteacher and director of boarding maintain good, effective oversight of the provision. They focus on creating an environment which provides care, nurture and support to boarders. Enthusiastic and dedicated boarding staff support boarders, with the school values at the core of their practice. Senior leaders review their offer to parents, and have adapted the provision in response, developing the part time boarding arrangements.

Staff receive a wide range of training opportunities about a variety of topics. Boarding meetings, supervisions and reflective practice sessions are held with staff regularly. They provide staff with a forum to reflect on what has happened and what is planned for boarders.

Boarding accommodation is of a good standard. Spacious, welcoming common rooms provide a comfortable space for boarders to socialise.

Governors understand the strengths and areas for improvement in boarding. They maintain good oversight of the provision, including meeting boarders. Governors provide challenge to leaders and work collaboratively with the school to develop the vision for a high-quality boarding experience.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Points for improvement

- School leaders should ensure there is clarity for boarders about the functionality of the CCTV. In addition, ensure there is a clear record of occasions when the CCTV has been viewed in line with the policy, and that the policy itself is kept under regular review.
- School leaders should ensure they consider how to improve communication with parents.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Boarding school details

Social care unique reference number: SC039847

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Helen Cullen

Type of school: Boarding School

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