

Port Regis School

Inspection report for Boarding School

Unique reference number	SC026907
Inspection date	05/11/2007
Inspector	Sue Shaw
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Port Regis School, Motcombe Park, SHAFTESBURY, Dorset, SP7 9QA
------------------------	---

Telephone number	01747 857800
Email	office@portregis.com
Registered person	Port Regis School Limited
Head of Care	Peter Anthony Edward Dix
Head/Principal	Peter Anthony Edward Dix
Date of last inspection	16/11/2004

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high standard
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

Port Regis School is a co-educational independent boarding school providing boarding for children aged seven to 13 years. The school is situated in 150 acres of parkland one mile from the town of Shaftesbury in the Dorset countryside. At the time of this inspection the school had 235 boarders and 113 day pupils. The younger children are accommodated in the main building in three "houses". Two purpose built boarding houses, one for boys and one for girls are situated close to the main building and accommodate the older children.

Founded in 1881 Port Regis is a Christian foundation, although children of all faiths are welcomed at the school. The school aims to provide children with an all-round education of the highest quality and encourages every child to discover and develop the talents and interests that lie within them. The school offers a wide-ranging academic curriculum and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Port Regis School operates its boarding provision to a very high standard with outstanding outcomes for its children.

This inspection was carried out as part of the normal inspection process on an announced basis. The aim of the inspection was to review the 21 key standards for Boarding Schools. As part of the inspection process questionnaires were sent to parents and children who board at the school to gain their views. Responses received were generally complimentary and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the pastoral care provided.

The school demonstrates excellent attention to health care and children feel well looked after if unwell. There are extensive and robust systems in place throughout the school, which aim to protect children and ensure that effective responses are made in all safeguarding areas. Children benefit from excellent levels of individual support from both staff and other adults external to the school. The school clearly demonstrates its commitment to anti-discriminatory practice, valuing and embracing diversity. There is an abundance of forums, both formal and informal, for children to contribute their views to the boarding practice. Staff are encouraged and well supported to undertake training opportunities and have their performances reviewed on a regular basis. There is very strong leadership and monitoring of all aspects of the care provided.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection of Port Regis School was very positive. There were no recommendations made. Improvements made by the school have been reported on in the body of the report.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is promoted through an excellent range of health education information, policies and procedures which staff actively put into place. The programme is wide ranging and covers smoking, alcohol, drugs, healthy eating and relationship education and can include the involvement of external speakers as appropriate. All staff are aware of the programme and are able to follow up on any issues as appropriate. Parents are made aware of the curriculum and have been involved in a session run by Police Protection Officers. The introduction of the afternoon recreation period has brought benefits to the children in terms of relaxation and refreshment during the afternoons.

Children's health is maintained through a professional and well organised health centre. The senior nurse effectively manages all areas relating to medical treatment and first aid. The school have effective policies and procedures in place for administering medication and providing treatment. Children's health is further protected by appropriately trained staff and thorough recording systems which ensure that medication and first aid are provided as required. Effective systems are in place to ensure the safe use of household and homeopathic remedies and the storage and dispensing of controlled drugs. Children, staff and the majority of parents are all extremely complimentary about the care provided by the nursing staff.

Children benefit from a high quality catering provision which supplies nutritious and well balanced meals. The school's decision to bring the catering provision 'in-house' has resulted in greater choice, fresher produce and increased consultation. Children are consulted about meals and menu planning, through the use of external surveys and a food committee and are actively educated about healthy eating. A wide range of choices are offered and any special diets are well catered for.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's welfare is protected and promoted through the school's positive approach to dealing with bullying. A comprehensive policy is followed in practice and the children and staff are very clear about what they should do if concerned about bullying. Children reported very low levels of bullying incidents throughout the school and confirmed that incidents are dealt with effectively and sensitively.

Children's welfare is protected through clear and robust child protection policies and procedures which are consistent with the local Safeguarding Children Procedures. All staff have received child protection training and have a clear understanding about their responsibilities in respect of keeping children safe. The designated child protection officer for the school demonstrates a good awareness of the key legislation in respect of child protection and ensures all staff have regular training as appropriate.

Children are encouraged to develop self discipline and the ethos of the school supports the positive reinforcement of good behaviour. This is achieved through the minimal use of punishments and a culture which celebrates achievement and community support. The school has clear and appropriate policies and guidelines relating to behaviour, discipline and the use of punishments. Children confirmed that they considered the punishments that are in use to be fair.

Children's welfare is protected through a thorough complaints procedure. Parents and children are informed about how they can raise any concerns or complaints they have. Children confirmed they knew how to raise any concern or worry and that it would be dealt with appropriately and promptly. Records demonstrate all complaints are taken seriously with clear outcomes recorded and any further actions necessary.

Children's welfare is further promoted through an excellent school captains (prefect) system which is supported by clear guidance and regular oversight from senior staff. Captains are provided with a comprehensive induction which includes appropriate training in relation to anti-bullying and responding to homesickness etc. Younger pupils were very complimentary about the captains in the school and felt they acted as role models and were someone they would go to if they needed help.

Children are protected from the risk of fire by rigorous fire safety precautions and well trained staff. Regular fire evacuations take place and all fire safety equipment is checked and serviced in line with the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service with detailed records maintained. Children demonstrate a very good understanding of the school's evacuation procedures.

Children's privacy is respected by non-intrusive staff who are sensitive when entering dormitories and supervising bathrooms etc.

Children's welfare is protected by a thorough and robust recruitment process. The school follows a very clear policy on recruitment in line with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS) guidance. The school maintains detailed records of the selection process undertaken and ensures rigorous checks are in place prior to new staff commencing work. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks at enhanced level are undertaken on all staff employed at the school prior to employment. The school disposes of CRB disclosure information in line with the CRB code of practice, however, does not currently keep a record of the unique reference number of the Disclosure. This is recommended to further evidence that checks have been undertaken as required. Children are further protected by the school which requires annual confirmation that all taxi drivers used by the school have been

checked through a CRB process. Any adult not employed by the school but living in the same building as boarding accommodation has a suitable agreement specifying their terms of accommodation.

Children's welfare is protected and safeguarded through comprehensive security measures. The school has a clear policy process on restricting public access that is reviewed regularly. Boarding accommodation is reserved solely for the use of those boarders designated to it. All boarding areas are suitably protected by the use of window restrictors, door key pads and locks. Security staff are employed by the school and undertake regular checks.

Children are safeguarded by an extensive health and safety policy, comprehensive risk assessments and well trained staff. Maintenance issues are prioritised and staff work effectively to ensure boarders are protected from unavoidable hazards. Children are protected by effective checking of electrical appliances and gas installations, water checking and safe storage of all substances hazardous to health. Children's welfare is promoted through a variety of assessments relating to activities undertaken, the school grounds and any other known risks.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from excellent levels of individual support provided by pastoral and academic staff. Tutors play a pivotal role in the wellbeing of the children, providing the link between the academic and pastoral systems. The appointment of a senior tutor to oversee the tutor system has further strengthened this key function within the school. In addition there are numerous other staff readily available to provide support and encouragement. These include the houseparents, independent listeners, the nursing staff and the matrons. Children are clear about which members of staff they can go to for personal support. The introduction of the "Helpful box" in the lower school has provided younger children with a further opportunity to make private and anonymous views known to their teacher.

Children's lives are enhanced through the school's commitment to equal opportunities and the caring ethos experienced by them. The school positively welcomes and celebrates the diversity of its children. Appropriate arrangements are made for children whose first language is not English and staff are proactive in supporting and promoting the integration of the overseas students. Individualised support provided to children is sensitive to any specific cultural/personal welfare needs. Excellent provision is made, where feasible and desired, for boarders with any special dietary or religious observance requirements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from having an abundance of opportunities to contribute their views and opinions to the operation of the boarding provision. These include weekly dorm captain meetings, house meetings, school committee, food committee, tutor system and suggestion sheets. Staff respond to children in a positive and supportive way and children commented on the positive relationships they had with staff.

Children benefit from positive contact with their parents, families and friends. They have their own email addresses and can use the boarding house landlines in addition to their personal mobile telephones. Communication between parents and staff is good. There is close contact between house staff, tutors and nursing staff to ensure parents are kept up to date with progress or any worries that may arise. Children are encouraged to maintain contact with parents and guidance has been provided to tutors on the importance of letter writing.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children benefit from a well managed school. The statement of boarding principles and practice is readily available to parents, pupils and staff and accurately reflects the aims and organisation of boarding at the school. In addition the school provides a comprehensive and clear information folder for children new to the school.

Children benefit from a very well run school. There are excellent monitoring systems in place which ensure senior staff in the school have a clear overview of key records relating to risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents. Action can then be taken in respect of any trends or identified risks .

Children's welfare is protected and promoted by excellent staffing levels, day and night, with the relevant experience to meet their needs. Children confirmed they always knew who was on duty at any one time and how to summon assistance should the need arise. There are good arrangements for managing and supervising staff.

Children benefit from dedicated boarding staff teams who are clear about their roles within the house and who they are accountable to. House staff meet on a regular basis with senior staff and tutors through a variety of forums to ensure they are kept informed of any specific issues relating to the children. Training is supported and

some staff have attended specific Boarding School Association courses. House staff receive regular appraisal which provides the opportunity to review performance in respect of their boarding duties.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure a record is maintained of the unique reference number of the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure for all staff appointed. (NMS 38.2)