

Gordonstoun School

School Care Accommodation Service

Gordonstoun Schools Ltd
Elgin
IV30 5RF

Telephone: 01343 837837

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 16 November 2017

Service provided by:
Gordonstoun Schools Limited

Service provider number:
SP2006008231

Care service number:
CS2006117721

About the service

Gordonstoun School is set in a rural area, beside the village of Duffus, near Elgin. It provides independent, co educational, non-denominational education for young people aged between 8 and 13 years in Aberlour House junior school, and between 13 and 18 years in the senior school.

The schools pastoral aims include their intention to:

- Provide a family environment (in the boarding houses) in which students feel, comfortable, safe and secure in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.
- Provide equal opportunities for students.
- Encourage tolerance, understanding and positive interaction between students.
- Provide the conditions for students to develop their intellectual talents.
- Provide activities and projects which will encourage each student to develop spiritually, culturally, morally and socially.
- Develop students responsibility - for themselves, for others and for the environment.

What people told us

Prior to the inspection the students were asked to complete a confidential electronic survey. The Care Inspectorate received 255 responses with 70 comments. The questions covered a wide range of aspects of the boarding experience at Gordonstoun.

Forty-eight parents/carers also responded to an e-mail questionnaire. Many of these responses provided detailed responses to each of the questions asked.

The inspection was carried out by four inspectors and a volunteer inspector. We spoke directly to a large number of children and young people both individually and in groups. Inspectors also joined students for meals in the canteen, at various times of the day and night in their boarding houses, at a dance performance and for chapel in the morning.

Guardians in the local community who care for students from Gordonstoun were also visited (see report).

Feedback from young people was largely positive, with some examples including:

"I receive a lot of love from the staff in the boarding house. I have a lot of fun there. I can speak with adults if I have a problem very easily, they are always there for us".

"Honestly, this has been the best school I've been to so far".

"I love this school. Everyone treats each other well and can definitely trust each other".

"It's nice how the system of this school works compared to the other ones. It gives you enough stuff to do to keep your mind off your family and such, but not too much to make you stressed. Even if you feel you are lonely there's always someone to help/support you".

"The boarding house is a very happy place. I never see an unhappy face anywhere. I would like to get more phoning time and the staff are very nice".

"I really like it here and I would never like to change school. Any matters are taken seriously. All my matters are taken seriously and all of the teachers know what they are doing, and know how to care for pupils".

"I would like to bring extra attention to the excellence of the pastoral care team and the counselling/therapy services available. As well as in-house support from matrons and house staff".

"I feel that I do get enough care and the boarding house facilities are great".

"I like almost everything but I would want to have more free time and to have more freedom".

"Though we may occasionally complain about little things, you would be hard pushed to find someone who is really unhappy here. This is the most amazing place I could hope to grow up and develop in and I wouldn't wish to be anywhere else".

"The school is a very respectful environment, with staff respecting my confidentiality...I know I can trust them to put my wellbeing first, for they only have our best interests at heart, and they don't act without discussing the implications with us. Pastoral care is much better than previous school. Great environment. I love it and wish I could stay here much longer".

"The staff and care here is really good and they always make sure everyone is okay and do their hardest to help others".

"I have been at the school for a long time and have loved every second of it".

"My house staff are most welcoming. I can always see matron during the day for a chat, a biscuit or a hug. If I'm having a bad day she's always there to listen to what I have to say and find constructive solutions. There's a balance between independence and having a good routine...Pastoral care staff take my issues seriously...Overall I am overjoyed with the care I receive at Gordonstoun".

Other comments from students included:

"House rules for our age group are inappropriate and way too strict".

"I feel that the boarding house isn't treated like a home away from home, more like a type of youth hostel".

"It's supportive and nice...but they don't deal with bullying the correct way".

"Update the rules for more modern-day things".

"I feel that when it comes to healthcare we are not taken seriously enough".

"Everyone in the school is so busy that it can be difficult to get the help and support needed some of the time".

Parental responses were mixed. Some parents stated that communication was very good, with others stating that they would like to be contacted more.

Almost all parents felt they could raise concerns or make suggestions, knew who to contact and gave positive examples.

Most parents stated that they felt their children were very safe, however, there were a small but significant number of examples which contradicted this.

Some felt that food could improve and that some boarding houses needed to be updated.

Individual examples were also given of excellent care and support given to students, and some less positive aspects of school life their children had encountered.

Self assessment

No self assessment was requested by the Care Inspectorate in the inspection year 2017/18.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

Staff were motivated and committed to meeting the needs of students in all areas of school life. They developed very positive relationships with students, who they knew well. Most students spoken with stated that they felt well supported and cared for (see 'What people told us'). Guardians in the local community also provided invaluable support to students and provided high quality pastoral care, supported well by school staff.

During our inspection visits to the boarding houses, we experienced a very positive culture of care with an ethos of mutual respect. Pupils spoken with described feeling safe and well cared for by boarding staff and through a range of student led support systems such as peer mentoring and buddies. These promoted a culture of mutual respect and responsibility and added to the formal systems of support students could access. Students were made aware of informal and formal ways to raise any issues of concern within the student handbook, including details of external organisations such as Childline and the Care Inspectorate.

All staff had regular child protection training and had a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures. A designated child protection officer worked closely with the senior members of the pastoral team and relevant external agencies. Comprehensive wellbeing and child protection policies were in place. Senior students had also received child protection training and were aware when concerns would be shared with the Child Protection Officer.

Health and wellbeing was promoted across the school. Students were involved in a wide range of activities which promoted their physical and mental health. There were numerous outdoor activities and sports on offer, as well as clubs and groups which promoted various interests which developed confidence and self-esteem. Achievement was recognised and celebrated for all students.

The school had an on site medical centre where the school nurse and healthcare assistants provided 24 hour care. A visiting medical practice offered GP appointments, supported by nursing staff. Students spoken with in the boarding houses confirmed that they knew how to access help or support if they felt unwell at any time,

including during the night. In addition to this the school also employed a clinical psychologist who supported both students and staff and had links to the local Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). This gave students a wide range of professionals who could support their physical and emotional wellbeing.

The school had developed their own electronic wellbeing system which was used very effectively to record and share important information. As it had been developed on-site there was ongoing opportunity for further responsive development. The system had levels of access, ensuring that more sensitive information could only be seen by relevant staff.

Overall the system was a real asset to the school and to ensuring student wellbeing.

Staff recruitment and induction was generally good. A formal induction programme provided new staff with the knowledge and training they needed, alongside support from colleagues. Staff then attended a variety of training courses relevant to the health and wellbeing of the students they cared for. Pastoral staff worked well together and supported each other across the school's different environments.

What the service could do better

Staff were very aware of the additional support individual students needed, however, these were not always formalised in a support plan. **(See recommendation 1.)**

Medication systems were generally good, however, the inspection identified some improvements which could be made with overseas medication and controlled drugs. Increased auditing would also provide greater safeguards. **(See recommendation 2.)**

Healthcare staff had identified plans to increase the opportunity for health promotion and extend their collaborative working across the school. This would be a welcome addition to the healthcare services already available to students. Healthcare staff should also have a greater role in more frequent auditing of medication kept in the boarding houses (see above).

Pastoral staff had opportunities to share their views and contribute to the development of the boarding houses, however, should also have regular 1:1 meetings (supervision) with their line manager looking at their practice and professional development. This would compliment a staff appraisal. **(See recommendation 3.)**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 3

1. Students who have any additional support needs should have a formal plan of support which is shared with those people key to ensuring that the support is provided.

National Care Standards School Care Accommodations Services - Standard 3: Care and Protection.

2. Medication systems should be reviewed to ensure they comply with best practice. More frequent external auditing should be introduced to ensure greater safeguards.

National Care Standards School Care Accommodations Services - Standard 13: Keeping Well - Medication.

3. Pastoral staff should have regular 1:1 meetings with their line manager.

National Care Standards School Care Accommodation Services - Standard 7: Management and Staffing.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
8 Jan 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
26 Jun 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
29 Nov 2012	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
6 Sep 2011	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
24 Feb 2009	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
24 Sep 2008	Announced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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