

Beechen Cliff School

Alexandra Park, Bath, Somerset BA2 4RE

Inspection date

27/06/2019

Context of the inspection

The last social care inspection of the boarding provision took place in May 2018. Since then, the school has closed and re-opened as a new school within the Midsummer Norton Schools Partnership multi-academy trust. This inspection took place to monitor the progress made in meeting welfare requirements for boarding schools.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

Leaders and managers take effective steps to develop and progress the boarding provision. Their development plan is helping them to make steady and incremental improvements. The headteacher and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) spoke with confidence and determination about the work that they have undertaken and the additional improvements that they are planning.

The appointment of a new DSL has brought about much-needed improvement. Several safeguarding systems, including a weekly meeting of the safeguarding team, have now been established to underpin practice. These improvements have paved the way by allowing leaders to have oversight and scrutiny of concerns. Nevertheless, these systems are in their infancy and are not yet fully embedded in practice.

The DSL has safeguarding experience and, is bringing an increased level of rigour to the management of safeguarding concerns. Nonetheless, there are a small number of practice issues that had not been identified by the safeguarding team or the senior leaders. The DSL requires sufficient time and support to ensure that his oversight is always good.

A safeguarding culture is evident through various aspects of school and boarding life. Children say that they feel safe at school. They talk about an increased focus on equality, tolerance and respect and on keeping each other safe. This has made them consider their own behaviour and the effect it could have on others.

Not all staff receive formal regular supervision. For example, the head of boarding receives peer support from an external partner. This is a missed opportunity to ensure sufficient challenge and accountability. Neither is the DSL provided with important information about his team's performance. Boarding staff are receiving regular

supervision. The quality of this supervision requires improvement as, currently, there is a lack of focus on meeting children's needs and discussing safeguarding matters. These weaknesses limit appropriate oversight, monitoring and challenge.

Inspectors will review the national minimum standards in full at the next full inspection of the boarding provision.

National minimum standards

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

- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupils; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the secretary of state. (NMS 11.1)
- The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary. (NMS 13.1)
- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. (NMS 13.2)
- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. (NMS 13.3)
- The senior boarding staff have an adequate level of experience and training. (NMS 13.6)

Inspection team

Tracey Ledder

Lead Social Care Inspector

Paula Lahey

Regulatory Inspection Manager

Information about this school

Beechen Cliff School is part of a multi-academy trust. The academy of 1,320 pupils provides education for boys only from 11 to 16 and has a mixed-gender sixth form of 350. The school has a small boarding facility, housing up to 32 pupils. The school is located close to the centre of Bath and caters for pupils of all abilities.

School details

Unique reference number	146972
Social care unique reference number	SC475345
DfE registration number	800/5400

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.

Type of school	Boarding school
Number of boarders on roll	1,172
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 18
Headteacher	Andrew Davies
Date of previous boarding inspection	23/05/2018
Telephone number	0122 548 0466
Email address	Headmaster@beechencliff.org.uk

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