

# Burford School

Burford School,  
Cheltenham Road,  
BURFORD, Oxfordshire,  
OX18 4PL

## Inspection dates

17 November 2015 to 19 November 2015

## Overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Good**

Quality of care and support

Good

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

## Summary of key findings

### The boarding provision is good because

- Students say their boarding experience is good and is getting better day by day. They are fully integrated into the life of the school. There is no discrimination. They blossom as a result of their boarding experience.
- Students make friends. They are able to visit other countries as a result of the relationships they form. Boys and girls are able to relax socially in each other's communal areas. Students say there is a good community spirit and they are like a big family.
- There is a strong, proactive and experienced governing body who are fully involved in the life of the school, including boarding. They are a critical friend and underpin the culture of continuous improvement.
- The well-being of students is at the forefront of practice. They are safe and secure. Staff ensure all their needs are met so students can fully engage with their learning and experience life to the full.
- Morale is good. Staff are positive about the changes the acting head of boarding is making. He is showing excellent leadership.
- The boarding experience fully underpins academic study. Boarding and education professionals work closely together to meet the individual needs of each student.

## Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Educate students in utilising secondary emergency escape routes and consider a trial evacuation using the secondary egress.
- Ensure a clear written safeguarding chronology is kept for every incident and reviewed by the designated safeguarding lead at the close of an investigation.
- Promote the role of the independent listener so students are confident to utilise the service.
- Keep written records of supervision for all staff in boarding.

## Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection with three hours' notice. Inspection activities included: observation of boarding practice over two evenings; formal and informal discussion with a wide range of students who board; sharing mealtimes; discussions with the head teacher, acting head of boarding and other members of the senior management team; boarding and ancillary staff were consulted; contact was made with the local statutory safeguarding authority; a tour of all the accommodation was undertaken; a wide range of documentation concerning boarding was scrutinised; the responses on Parent View were considered; and point-in-time surveys for boarders and staff were conducted during the inspection and the response taken into consideration.

## Inspection team

Keith Riley	Lead social care inspector
Chris Peel	Social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Burford School is situated in the small town of Burford in Oxfordshire. It is a maintained school with academy status for girls and boys aged from 11 to 19 years. There were 1140 students on roll at the time of inspection, of which 80 were boarders. There were 46 girls and 34 boys in boarding. The boarding site is a short walking distance from the main school. The residential provision was last inspected in May 2013.

## Inspection judgements

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people** **Good**

Students say they enjoy boarding. They are accepted and valued. They say they love boarding, feel safe and comfortable. One student said, 'It is an ever changing rainbow.' Another student said, 'There is a good atmosphere, one of cooperation and camaraderie. Staff do their best for you.' A parent stated, 'I'm very impressed with the pastoral support. They know (name of child) and genuinely cared. They are professional people who support her and communicate well.' A relative said, 'I have seen a great difference in (name of child). She has blossomed there.'

Students are polite, mature and have a sense of their responsibility to society. One student is involved in an international independent organisation that campaigns for human rights. Other students are involved in the combined cadet force. They participate in challenging activities and develop skills such as self-reliance and leadership. Other students engage with established British youth award schemes.

Students speak positively of the acting head of boarding. They say, 'He values our opinion and respects us. He does things promptly when we ask.' He has been effective in bringing positive change in a short period. Students are able to engage in activities they have requested, such as rock climbing.

The senior management recognise the need to promote independent living further. They have developed a 'flat' in the girls boarding, with plans to replicate on the boys side. They plan to install more cookers to promote independent cooking. They plan to review how the laundry is managed so students can take more responsibility.

Students report they feel safe and secure. There is no bullying. They have various formal and informal forums to express their views, wishes and feelings. All young people, spoken to at inspection, identify an adult they can trust within the school. The acting head of boarding has recently reviewed the role of the independent listener. He has appointed a local person who can visit the school to see students face to face, as well as being available by telephone. This new arrangement is yet to be embedded in the culture. Students say they prefer to speak to someone who knows them better.

**Quality of care and support** **Good**

Staff demonstrate a sensitive and thoughtful approach toward students. Relationships are warm and nurturing. Students say staff treat them with respect and dignity, it is an inclusive environment. Staff support students to explore and embrace their emerging identity. Students speak highly of the approach and understanding of staff.

Staff ensure care plans are in place for students with particular needs. These cover a broad range of issues including emotional well-being, mental health, physical health and any underlying diagnosis, such as Asperger's syndrome. Staff involve other professionals,

who are experts in their particular field, to inform the care planning.

Students enjoy a range of activities within the facility, the local community and surrounding areas. They say they have a choice and staff will accommodate their requests, for example by making a mini-bus available to travel to an event of their choice.

Students benefit from a wide range of healthy food choices. Meals are nutritious and of good quality. Students are able to have seconds if they wish. Meal times are social occasions where students enjoy each other's company across the year groups.

Students stay in good health. As well as healthy eating, students engage in a variety of physical exercise. This includes a gym in the boarding accommodation. Staff support students to attend routine health appointments and to take any medication. They consult with health professionals to ensure students are receiving the best possible support. Health plans have clear objectives, actions and responsibilities.

The acting head of boarding puts bespoke arrangements into place to meet the individual needs of students, for example by allowing an admission in term-time. This maximises the opportunity for a student to successfully settle and adapt to boarding. The induction process is robust, enabling students to become familiar with their new environment quickly and make friends. Their peers are proactive in providing a circle of support, for example by accompanying them on the short walk to and from school. Students have their emotional needs met so they can fully engage with their academic studies.

Students state they are not isolated in boarding. They are easily able to contact their family and friends, regardless of what country they live in. They take advantage of technology, such as video conferencing. Close relatives, including those living overseas, describe the communication as very good.

The boarding accommodation is a grade II listed building. The senior management team ensure there is significant investment to maintain the heritage as well meet the needs of modern living. An example is wi-fi access. This is excellent in some parts of the building and needs improving in other parts. There are clear plans to address it. The furnishings and décor are excellent in some parts with clear plans to improve facilities in the remaining areas.

### **How well children and young people are protected**

**Good**

The senior management team ensure staff have training in safeguarding and child protection. Staff are knowledgeable of the procedures to follow in the event of any concern. They keep written records. Key staff do not always keep a clear written chronology of safeguarding events in every case. This limits the capacity of the designated safeguarding lead to review events and reflect on the effectiveness of procedures and practice. A strong governing board keep an oversight on safeguarding issues.

The senior management team demonstrate good leadership. They ensure they are up to

date with the most recent statutory guidance and staff have up-to-date training, such as in the 'PREVENT' strategy. They have made contact with the local authority officer responsible for radicalisation and extremism. They work with the local authority officer responsible to safeguarding for advice and guidance. They follow this meticulously.

Students know and understand how to evacuate in an emergency. They practise fire drills regularly. Some students are not aware of the secondary escape routes, for example one that leads onto a flat roof. Although approved by the fire and rescue service, students do not practice using this egress in the event that their primary route from the building is blocked. Staff have personal emergency evacuation plans to follow for any students requiring specific assistance to evacuate in an emergency.

Staff keep young people as safe as possible in the cyber world. Software provides an initial filter when students access the internet. Staff work with students to educate them about risks. Students have a responsible and mature approach. Staff identify individual risks and put into place clear risk management plans for e-safety.

The senior management team have a robust procedure for the vetting of staff. This includes safer recruitment training. They employ adults deemed to be suitable to work with children.

Staff treat students as mature and responsible individuals. They have clear expectations of behaviour set out in an 'achievement and behaviour triangle.' Students are involved in the development of rewards and sanctions. Students respond well to this approach and reciprocate the way they are treated. There is no need for any physical intervention. Behaviour is excellent.

The acting head of boarding ensures the facility managers have all the necessary health and safety certification in place. External experts assess the environment and ensure it is safe for students to live in.

### **Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

**Good**

The acting head of boarding is providing excellent leadership. Examples are addressing the gender imbalance in staffing and promoting the democratic election of student 'senior leaders.' Staff speak positively of the support provided. One said, 'He is to be commended on his management and the care of staff and boarders.' He provides formal support through regular supervision. Supervision records are not always recorded in writing. This limits the opportunity to reflect on agreed actions or issues.

The acting head of boarding is also the deputy head-teacher. He ensures there is a mix of residential boarding staff and boarding tutors. This means there is close and collaborative working between care and education. Boarding fully underpins the education of the students, such as prep time every evening. Students value the opportunity to discuss and explore their learning with teachers in the residential environment. They have every chance of academic success.

The senior management team ensure staff receive all core training including

safeguarding, extremism and child sexual exploitation. They arrange any additional training as required, such as understanding Asperger's syndrome or self-harming behaviour. The acting head of boarding uses the comprehensive appraisal system to assess performance and identify individual staff training needs.

Governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They bring a wealth of experience and insight to oversee the school and act as a critical friend. There are clear strategies for future development. This includes the residential arrangements as well as the fabric of the building. They embrace further training, for example through a nationally recognised boarding school body. The terms of reference for each committee has recently been re-written. For boarding, the committee aims to become 'residential experts.' They are keen to hear directly from students who prepare and present a report to the boarding committee. A national body recognised the contribution of the governing body by giving them an award.

All required policies are in place and implemented effectively and record keeping is good. The senior management team have met the previous points of improvement, made at the last inspection, in full.

## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138289
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC013029
<b>DfE registration number</b>	825/2220

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	80
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	11-19
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kathy Haig
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	9 May 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01993 823303
<b>Email address</b>	admin.4040@burford.oxon.sch.uk

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