

# Sexeys School

Sexeys School, Cole Road, Bruton, Somerset BA10 0DF

<b>Inspection dates</b>	12/10/2016 to 14/10/2016	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of care and support	Inadequate	4
How well children and young people are protected	Inadequate	4
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings

### The boarding provision is inadequate because

- Serious and widespread safeguarding failings place boarders at risk.
- Oversight of child protection matters by senior leaders, managers and governors is poor.
- Child protection concerns are not managed in accordance with 'Working together to safeguard children (2015)'. Policies relating to children missing from home and care, and children missing from education are not in place.
- Safeguarding records are not well maintained. Some records are poorly documented and do not provide a comprehensive chronology of the actions taken and the decisions made.
- Leaders and managers have failed to implement the school's anti-bullying policy.
- The management of medication is inadequate. The dispensing, administration, recording and storage of medication are unsafe.
- Important information about boarders' individual needs is not routinely shared among staff, and, therefore, not known by all adults who care for boarders.
- Leaders and managers do not use risk assessments effectively to protect boarders.
- Care plans, risk assessments and health plans lack critical information about boarders' needs, health, behaviours and risks.
- Boarding staff do not have the information and training that enable them to meet the varying needs of boarders.
- Boarding and nursing staff are not provided with formal supervision to help them to improve their practice. In addition, not all boarding staff have had their performance

appraised annually.

- Leaders and managers have not ensured that all national minimum standards are met.

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools**

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:

- 3.1 The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of boarders who are unwell and ensures that the physical and mental health and emotional well-being of boarders is promoted. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, dealing with medical emergencies and the use of household remedies.
- 3.4 All medication is safely and securely stored, and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the boarders to whom they are prescribed. Boarders allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so.
- 5.1 Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for boarders. It is well organised and managed, with risk assessments undertaken and findings acted on, to reduce risk for all boarders. Where boarders are aged eight years or over, sleeping accommodation for boys is separate from sleeping accommodation for girls.
- 5.8 Any use of surveillance equipment, for example, closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras, or patrolling of school buildings or grounds for security purposes, does not intrude unreasonably on boarders' privacy.
- 6.3 The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- 11.1 The school ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 12.1 The school has and consistently implements a written policy to promote good behaviour among pupils. This policy includes: measures to combat bullying, including cyberbullying, and to promote positive behaviour; school rules; disciplinary sanctions; when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions.
- 12.2 The policy complies with relevant legislation and has regard to guidance, and is understood by staff and pupils.
- 13.3 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.

- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
  - 13.9 The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.
  - 15.1 Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding.
  - 15.6 Staff working in the school know and implement the school's policy in relation to boarders going missing and their role in implementing that policy. Staff actively search for boarders who are missing, including working with police where appropriate.
  - 17.1 Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Boarders are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith.
  - 18.1 The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards.
  - 19.1 Any prefect system (or equivalent) gives prefects (or equivalent) appropriate specific duties and responsibilities that are appropriate for them, with adequate staff supervision, training and measures to counter possible abuses of the role.
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## Information about this inspection

The school was notified of the inspection on the morning of 12 October 2016. The inspection team arrived at 11.00am. The inspectors visited the boarding provision, observed staff and boarders' interaction and met with boarders, boarding staff, the pastoral team, the healthcare team and senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised a variety of records.

## Inspection team

Sharron Escott	Lead social care inspector
Nicola Lownds	Social care inspector
Paula Lahey	Social care inspection manager

## **Full report**

### **Information about this school**

Sexeys School is a maintained, mixed, boarding school in Bruton, Somerset for boarders aged 11 to 18 years. The school admits pupils from all over the United Kingdom and has a small number of pupils from overseas. It offers both day and termly boarding places. The boarding accommodation is provided in three houses, all of which are located on the school site. The school has the capacity for accommodating 261 boarders. At the time of this inspection, there were 205 boarders.

## Inspection judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Inadequate**

Widespread safeguarding concerns impact negatively on the safety and the health and well-being of boarders. Child protection arrangements are not effectively managed and have resulted in a culture where information is not shared in accordance with the 'Working together to safeguard children (2015)' statutory guidance. Leaders do not share important information about boarders' needs with the staff that care for them, and do not refer all serious child protection concerns to external agencies. The staff responsible for managing child protection do not demonstrate a good understanding of the responsibilities associated with this role. Plans to change the person responsible for child protection are proposed, and the person assigned to take on the role is scheduled to undertake the training.

Senior leaders have failed to recognise and respond effectively to boarders' wide-ranging needs. As a result, they have not reviewed whether the current arrangements to care for boarders are sufficient and have not determined whether boarding staff have the required expertise, time and supervision to undertake their roles effectively. Boarding staff are not kept up to date with changes in legislation or the expectations set out in the inspection framework for boarding schools. Consequently, a large number of national minimum standards are not met, and the overall experiences and progress of boarders are inadequate.

Behaviour is not consistently well managed. Not all boarding staff act as good role models. Some boarders have complained about how one member of staff interacts with them. Senior leaders have met with the member of staff to address these concerns.

A system is in place whereby some older students, who are prefects, assist with the supervision of younger boarders, including helping at bedtime. Not all prefects said that they enjoy this task. There is currently no system to monitor how prefects carry out their duties and the impact that they may have on the younger children. Prefects spoken with during the inspection were unable to confirm that they had received training to assist them with their duties, in particular to ensure that they know how to respond to any welfare or safeguarding concerns that boarders may share with them.

An independent listener is available to boarders. However, information about how to contact her is not widely displayed throughout the school.

Since the previous inspection, the chapel has been redesignated as 'The Sanctuary' to make it more accessible to all students who have different faiths and cultural needs. Closed-circuit television has been installed in this area. The explanation given for this installation is that this serves to prevent allegations being made against staff who are working alone with boarders. This does not promote boarders' privacy. Staff have not identified other ways to manage the risk of allegations.

Boarders have good opportunities to develop their physical health and well-being through the provision of a good range of physical activities. Boarders are motivated, enjoy the activities and keep them fit. Boarders told the inspectors that there is plenty for them to do and they do not get bored. .

As boarders, young people have good opportunities to support their learning and academic development. Good resources are available to boarders and in addition, tutors are assigned to each boarding house and provide assistance during prep time and in the evenings. Boarders felt this provision supported their academic achievements well. Boarders presented as motivated and with a positive attitude to education. Boarders have very good opportunities to develop skills for work. Boarders told the inspectors that they enjoy boarding life and feel that it is a good foundation for life after school.

Boarders that contributed to the inspection said that they felt safe and that they could identify staff whom they could talk to about any concerns. One boarder said, 'We are one big family; the older boarders are like our brothers and sisters.' Others said that they make decent friends, and that this is better than they have experienced in other schools.

### **The quality of care and support**

### **Inadequate**

The arrangements in place for the administration and storage of medicines are unsafe. Medication is not always stored securely in the boarding houses. Staff fail to maintain records that detail when medication is administered. There is no audit system in place to identify whether medication is administered correctly and safely. Boarding staff do not receive training to provide them with adequate skills to safely manage medication.

Staff do not have a good understanding about how to meet the health needs of all boarders. Not all boarders who have healthcare needs have a written plan in place on their boarding file that describes how staff should meet these needs. Some boarding staff have limited knowledge about boarders' specific health conditions. This places boarders at significant risk.

Senior leaders fail to regularly obtain the views of all boarders. For example, boarders' council meetings in one house have not taken place since January 2016. Senior leaders know about this deficiency, but action to remedy this weakness has been too slow.

There is appropriate support from the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and pastoral team for those boarders that are most vulnerable. Boarders who have special educational needs are provided with additional support during the school day. The strategies implemented to support boarders at school are not always transferred successfully into the boarding houses.

New boarders receive sufficient information and opportunities to visit the boarding house prior to boarding at the school. Boarding staff work in partnership with parents/carers to help boarders settle and to reduce any homesickness. Boarders are able to maintain good contact with families and friends using a variety of methods, including telephone, email and Skype.

There is a good standard of accommodation provided to boarders. Boarding houses are well maintained, personalised and well resourced. Boarders are able to personalise their sleeping areas. Overall, the accommodation provides a homely and welcoming environment.

The quality of the food is good and it is plentiful. All meals are served in the main dining room. Snacks are available for boarders, but these are not always available without their asking. Boarders said that the kitchens are locked when they do not keep them clean or tidy. Some children and young people said that they would like the opportunity to 'cook a pizza' in their home so that they do not always need to visit the dining room.

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

## **Inadequate**

Boarders are at risk of harm as a result of widespread failures in ways in which they are helped and protected.

When managing child protection concerns, staff and senior leaders have failed to operate in accordance with 'Working together to safeguard children (2015)'. A number of concerns about the welfare of boarders and allegations against staff have not been referred to external agencies prior to an internal investigation. Some allegations of sexually inappropriate behaviour between boarders have been reported to the police but not to children's social care as required. Staff have failed to effectively assess the risks of these behaviours and the impact that they may have on boarders. As a result, strategies to minimise the risks are not known by all staff or consistently implemented.

Boarding staff demonstrate an ability to identify when boarders may be at risk of exploitation, but no direct action is taken in response to these concerns. Plans are not in place to reduce the risk of harm.

Records of child protection concerns are poorly maintained. This was a weakness at the previous inspection, in 2013, and senior leaders have not taken sufficient action to improve the records. Records do not demonstrate all of the actions that senior leaders have taken or confirm how they made specific decisions. On one occasion, a safeguarding record was falsified by a senior leader. The central child protection records do not include all of the concerns that have been raised. Information about serious bullying incidents, boarders being missing and allegations are often recorded in staff communication books or incident records stored in individual boarding houses. The senior leaders responsible for child protection said that they are not aware of the specific details and actions taken by staff in response to a number of concerning incidents, despite forums being in place for this information to be reported to them.

The prevalence of risks associated with boarders being exploited and self-harming are not known by all boarding staff. Key information about boarders' welfare is not shared effectively between departments. As a result, boarding staff are not aware of the actual needs of the boarders in their care and cannot reduce the risk of harm to them.

Senior leaders have not ensured that all policies relating to the welfare of students are prepared and understood by staff. For example, policies relating to missing from home and care and children missing education are not in place. Both of these policies are statutory guidance and senior leaders were not aware of the need to have them.

Leaders and managers fail to implement the school's anti-bullying policy effectively. Not all incidents of bullying are recognised as such and are not all recorded centrally. Staff have an inconsistent understanding of what constitutes bullying. As a result, the management of bullying is ineffective. As records are not well maintained, leaders and

managers do not have an accurate understanding of the frequency and severity of bullying incidents.

The school implements a behaviour policy that focuses on positive reinforcement and rewards. Boarders said that the rules are fair, but some said that not all staff apply them consistently. Consequences for poor behaviour are clear and link to the detention system or to improving the school community by activities such as litter picking. There are two isolated incidents of restraint being used. Leaders and managers failed to analyse these records effectively. As a result, an allegation made about staff involved in one of these incidents has not been dealt with appropriately.

In one case, senior leaders implemented a good plan to support a boarder who was the victim of an assault. However, this is an isolated plan and similar plans have not been used to support other boarders who have also been involved in serious incidents.

The maintenance and cleanliness of the school, grounds and boarding houses are good. The estates team takes prompt action to repair any damage and maintain the environment to a good standard. Utilities are checked as required, and fire safety is well managed. Boarders have regular opportunities to practise the fire evacuation procedures. During the inspection, the security practice of one boarding office was poor. This resulted in confidential information about boarders, medication and keys being exposed.

### **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

### **Inadequate**

Governors, senior leaders and managers have failed to ensure that all of the national minimum standards for boarding schools are met. There are serious weaknesses in how well boarders are protected and in the quality of care provided to them.

Monitoring systems are weak, despite senior leaders undertaking a review of the boarding provision. Boarding practices, the needs of boarders and safeguarding records are not effectively monitored. As a result, governors and senior leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the boarding provision's strengths and weaknesses.

The boarding provision is recognised as an integral part of the school but it is not effectively managed. Aims and objectives, as documented in the statement of purpose, are not all implemented successfully in practice. Staff and senior leaders have failed to adhere to boarding policies and procedures.

Senior leaders have failed to ensure that boarding staff have the required support, information and training to look after and manage boarders who have more complex needs. Neither boarding nor nursing staff are provided with formal supervision. As a result, opportunities to review and reflect upon their practice are missed. Senior leaders recognise that two house parents lack experience in their roles. However, it is not evident that action has been taken to support them.

Not all boarding staff have received training in safely managing medication or supporting boarders who have specific healthcare needs.

## 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 exceed the standard of good and result 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 their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

**Unique reference number**

<School URN>

**Social care unique reference number**

SC039847

**DfE registration number**

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**

479

**Gender of boarders**

Mixed

**Age range of boarders**

11 to18

**Headteacher**

**Date of previous boarding inspection**

**Telephone number**

01749 813 393

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headmaster@sexeyes.somerset.sch.uk

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