

Rikkyo School in England

Rikkyo School In England Trust

The Rikkyo School in England, Guildford Road, Rudgwick, Horsham, West Sussex
RH12 3BE

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

The Rikkyo School in England was first established in 1972 and is situated on the West Sussex/Surrey border, close to the village of Rudgwick. Rikkyo is an independent, co-educational school acknowledged by the Department of Education in Japan. All the boarding accommodation is located within the school grounds. At the time of the inspection there were 174 students boarding at the school; 96 of the boarders are boys, and 78 are girls. The boarding provision was last inspected in January 2014.

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 21 January 2014

Key findings from this inspection

This boarding school is good because:

- The ethos and objectives of the school promote a 'one big family' approach to communal living. This approach is embedded in practice and young people are

encouraged to integrate and support one another.

- The senior leadership team quickly identifies weaknesses in the boarding provision, and demonstrates commitment to addressing these.
- There has been a strong and effective drive to counteract and prevent bullying since some students raised concerns in February 2016.
- There are well-developed systems for monitoring the progress made by young people in terms of their educational attainment and personal development.
- Young people have, and take, opportunities to make their views known on the quality of care they are receiving and the progress they are making.
- Arrangements for ensuring young people's healthcare needs are met are strong and effective. There is a growing recognition from the senior leadership team of the need to promote young people's good mental health and emotional well-being.
- Positive behaviour is consistently promoted and there are clear boundaries and expectations in place. A restorative approach is taken to resolving unacceptable behaviour.
- Parents are kept informed of young people's progress and are consulted when young people are experiencing difficulties with any aspect of life at the school.
- The school has made strong links with local schools and the local community. This enhances young people's experience of cultural life in the United Kingdom.
- Leaders, managers and staff have high aspirations for young people, and support them to achieve well academically while enjoying a positive experience of life in the United Kingdom.

The boarding school's areas for development:

- The school's governing body does not currently take a proactive approach to monitoring the standard of the boarding and welfare provision in the school.
- The roles and responsibilities of external safeguarding professionals are not well understood by all members of the senior leadership team. There are no strong links with professionals from external safeguarding agencies.
- The school does not currently have a written policy for responding to young people going missing from the school.
- The standard of some boarding accommodation is not high and some health and safety hazards have not been identified and rectified.

- Staff with care responsibilities do not receive practice-related supervision.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

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

- 13.1 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.

Recommendations

- Ensure members of the school's governing body have a greater presence at the school and develop systems to monitor the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school.
- Leaders and managers, particularly those with responsibility for child protection practice, should develop their knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of external safeguarding agencies and build effective working relationships with relevant professionals.
- Prepare and implement a policy and procedure for responding to potential incidents of a student going missing from the school. Ensure all staff are familiar with the action they should take if such an incident occurs.
- Take action to ensure that all boarding accommodation is well maintained and free from health and safety hazards, and provides students with sufficient bedroom and private study space. Ensure that bathing facilities allow for an appropriate level of privacy.
- Ensure that staff have the opportunity for professional development by providing supervision that specifically focuses on their duties in the boarding houses, and through introducing a formal training programme for boarding staff.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are cared for in an environment that is focused on living together as 'one big family'. This is achieved through providing opportunities for the young people to integrate with their peers and staff. For example, young people regularly

change bedrooms within their age group, and seating arrangements at the dining table, so they can socialise and get to know their peers. The older students have a responsibility to monitor and support their younger peers and report any concerns they have for their welfare. This approach works in practice and the inspectors found a number of examples where older students had bought concerns to the attention of the staff. One young person, who had only been admitted to the school two months previously, told an inspector, 'The best thing about the school is the older students; they were very kind when I first arrived.'

Many aspects of the physical environment are conducive to the family approach to communal living. The staffroom is open plan and there is a section where young people can congregate socially or have access to computers from which they can email family members. Provision is also made for young people to make private telephone calls. Young people are kept informed of which members of staff are sleeping in overnight and they know how to seek support or assistance from them if needed. Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff and frequently name them, and the school's chaplain, as people they would speak to if they had any worries.

In recent months, the students' school council has been relaunched. This gives young people across the school the opportunity to make suggestions as to how their experience could be improved. The school council has consulted students on issues such as privacy in the boarding houses, and has fed back young people's views to the leadership team.

Two of the boarding houses do not provide a high standard of accommodation, particularly the boys' dormitories. Some young people said they have to queue for too long to take a shower and that the cramped layout of some shower facilities, particularly those with curtains rather than doors, compromises their privacy. Some dormitory bedrooms lack sufficient space for the number of young people occupying them and many young people have no access to private study areas within the boarding houses. Young people do, however, have access to other facilities in the school building where they can study in private. The boys' dormitories have no facilities for preparing snacks and hot drinks.

Leaders and managers recognise the need to improve the standard of accommodation for some of the young people. This is reflected in the school's development plan. The inspectors were also informed of plans to refurbish a building on the school site later this year, which will provide a higher standard of accommodation for the boys when completed.

The emotional well-being of young people is given priority. For example, young people's case files indicate when staff need to be aware that difficult family circumstances may have a negative impact on a young person's ability to manage social interactions, and on their overall progress. There is also recognition that young people who may have experienced bullying will need the support of staff and peers

to rebuild their confidence. Although there are no current concerns, nursing staff have previously liaised with the child and adolescent mental health service, and a support programme for young people who self-harm, when concerns for a young person's emotional well-being have emerged.

Under the leadership of the new headteacher, who came into post in April 2017, there is a greater recognition of the need to support young people to maintain good mental health. The development plan makes reference to developing a counselling service and providing opportunities for staff to update their knowledge of child psychology.

The school provides a high standard of healthcare for young people. The surgery is open each day until late into the evening and there are two qualified nurses on the staff team. An on-call rota ensures young people are able to receive medical attention at any time. There are sick-bay facilities in each of the boarding houses for young people to access if they are unwell. All teaching staff have received training in first aid. Comprehensive records are kept of young people's medical conditions; these contain the necessary consents for young people to receive medication and medical attention when required. There is a robust system for the recording and administration of prescribed medication.

The senior leadership team and staff have high aspirations for young people, particularly in terms of their academic achievement. Young people spoken to during the inspection were equally ambitious in their studies. Young people complete homework or undertake private study following their evening meal and those preparing for examinations often engage in extra lessons during the evening. Expectations are high, but young people, and their parents, are comfortable with this as part of their cultural norm.

Young people have the opportunity to engage in a range of sporting activities on the school premises during their free time. Music is a very popular hobby and there are excellent resources available for young people to pursue this interest. Frequent educational visits enable young people to experience cultural and leisure activities. Young people do not leave the school premises without adults accompanying them. The current staffing arrangements do not always provide sufficient numbers of staff at the weekend to enable young people to visit the nearby town as frequently as they would wish. The headteacher is in the process of assessing how staff rotas could be changed to address this.

The school's 'homestay' project provides young people with the opportunity to stay with a host family in the local area during some school holidays. It is a well organised project that takes account of young people's safety and the support needs of the host family. Young people spoken to during this inspection gave positive accounts of the project. They expressed appreciation for the opportunity to visit new places, and learn more about family life in the United Kingdom.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people do not leave the school premises unaccompanied by staff; this minimises the potential for them coming to harm in the local community. Similarly, young people's access to the internet is constantly supervised at the school. They do not have access to the internet through their personal electronic devices. The potential for young people to become exploited via the internet and online social media websites is low. However, the young people do receive guidance on how to use the internet safely, which helps prepare them for keeping safe in the future.

Since the regulator undertook an emergency inspection of the school in February 2016, leaders and managers have taken steps to ensure that young people are protected from bullying. As a result, staff and young people have a heightened awareness of the potential for bullying and the negative impact this can have on young people's well-being. The boarders' handbook contains a detailed description of the forms bullying can take and advice on how to counteract it. Young people who spoke to the inspectors about this issue had confidence in the ability of staff to manage any bullying incidents.

The headteacher and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) were able to describe the strategies in place for identifying bullying behaviour. These include ensuring young people can speak openly about any incidents they witness which could indicate a peer is being victimised. This approach has met with success. At the time of this inspection the headteacher was dealing effectively with concerns raised by some young people. The school's development plan recognises the need to continue developing practice so that all young people remain safe and free from bullying.

The young people who spoke to inspectors during this inspection consistently reported that they feel safe at the school. When asked if he felt safe in the boarding accommodation, one young person said, 'I have never really had to think about it, so that means I must feel safe.' Young people knew that the school's independent listener could be contacted if they wanted to speak to an external person. Posters providing information about national helplines and support services are displayed in strategic places around the school.

Detailed risk assessments are undertaken prior to young people being taken on excursions and educational visits, although these do not consistently record the experience and qualifications of the staff involved. Young people are provided with written instructions on how to keep safe and how to contact staff should they need assistance while on a trip. No risk assessments are completed in relation to bedroom-sharing arrangements in the boarding houses, although staff quickly identify situations where peer relationships indicate that some young people should not share.

A shortfall was identified in relation to one aspect of security on the school premises.

No risk assessment had been undertaken in respect of members of the public accessing the site. This was immediately rectified when the inspectors brought this to the attention of the school bursar.

There have been no occasions when young people have gone missing from the school. However, leaders and managers are not familiar with the responsibilities which arise from the statutory guidance for children who go missing. The school does not have a written policy and procedure for staff to follow if a young person did go missing.

Although the DSL and the deputy DSL have completed relevant training for their roles, they do not have a strong understanding of the roles and responsibilities of external safeguarding and child protection professionals. The DSL's are not sufficiently clear about who child protection matters should be reported to. In 2015, the local authority designated officer (LADO) investigated an incident which called into question the ability of two members of staff to protect young people from harm. Leaders and managers fully cooperated with the LADO and the concerns about the staff members were unsubstantiated. However, this incident was not seen as an opportunity to develop closer links with the LADO and other relevant professionals, such as the local authority education safeguarding lead officer.

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted in the boarding houses. There are firm boundaries in place and the young people are familiar with these. Expectations for behaviour are clearly set out in the boarders' handbook and the staff and older students consistently support young people to adhere to these. A restorative approach is taken to resolving conflicts and young people complete 'reflective essays' as part of the process. There have been no incidents which have resulted in the use of physical restraint. The use of sanctions is proportionate and there is a strong emphasis on consulting parents and carers to resolve concerns relating to unacceptable behaviour.

Staff recruitment processes are thorough and all background checks are completed prior to new employees taking up their posts. The procedure for recruiting host families, who provide accommodation to young people on the school's 'homestay' programme, is equally robust. Procedures could be strengthened by ensuring that references for new employees are obtained from more than one source, and that references are obtained from potential host families' employers. The administrative staff with responsibility for overseeing recruitment indicated that these changes would be introduced immediately.

Some potential health and safety hazards have not been addressed in two of the boarding houses. In one room, young people have access to a first floor balcony, but this does not have a barrier to prevent young people falling. In other rooms, there are large skylight windows without restrictors to limit the extent to which they can be opened. Inspectors also observed loose ceiling tiles and poorly maintained wooden window frames in some boarding house bedrooms. Leaders and managers were

quick to respond when these shortfalls were pointed out. Arrangements had been made for window restrictors to be fitted to the skylight windows before the inspection concluded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their current roles in April 2017, although both have significant experience of working at the school. The deputy headteacher has overall responsibility for the boarding provision. Teaching staff have a dual role and provide all the care to young people in the boarding houses. The headteacher has recognised that this arrangement means staff have a demanding workload and he is currently reviewing working arrangements. The turnover of staff is low, meaning several staff have significant experience of providing care and education for the young people.

There are well-established systems for monitoring the quality of care being provided. A particular strength of the school is the process for monitoring young people's progress, in terms of their personal and social development and their academic achievement. Young people are fully involved in this process, and are encouraged to express their views on the quality of care they receive and the support they are given to overcome any difficulties. Parents are provided with comprehensive reports, covering all aspects of their children's progress at the school.

The new leadership team has quickly identified weaknesses and areas for improvement. For example, following an incident where one young person was victimised by his peers, the leadership team has concluded that young people need to be more closely supervised between 4pm and 6pm, when they have free time. The inspectors identified aspects of practice which would benefit from further development; these had already been recognised by the leadership team, and are addressed in the school's development plan.

Although internal monitoring systems are effective, the external scrutiny from the governing body is not strong, and does not currently meet the national minimum standard for boarding schools. Trustees' meetings take place in Japan, and are reliant on the headteacher providing a report on how standards are being maintained. The headteacher then receives a report from the trustees, but not the minutes of what was discussed. Inspectors reviewed the trustees' report dated January 2017. It does not provide any evaluation of how young people are being kept safe and protected from harm. Visits to the school by members of the governing body are infrequent.

Leaders and managers work closely with parents when there are concerns that a young person may not be settling well and making the most of the opportunities the school provides. Provision is made for a young person to return to their parent's home, so that they can reflect on the headteacher's perception of what needs to change, how this can be achieved and whether the school can meet the young person's needs. Parents spoken to during this inspection had a positive view of how

the school supports young people. One parent said, 'With the advice and guidance he receives, he is learning to settle and to study.'

The school has developed a number of links with the local community, particularly other schools in the area. Members of the local community are invited to the school's open day, where they can learn more about the Japanese education system and the achievements of the young people. Stronger links are also being made with local churches and charities, with a view to providing young people with the opportunity to undertake voluntary work and so enhance their personal development.

The staff spoken to during this inspection felt well supported and expressed confidence in the ability of the new headteacher and deputy headteachers to make continuous improvements. Despite this, staff do not currently receive formal supervision which is focused on their roles and responsibilities as boarding staff. A good range of training opportunities are provided and these are relevant to meeting the needs of the young people. However, there is no set training programme which distinguishes between essential and desirable training for the staff. Managers are considering whether online training would be beneficial. If implemented, this would provide opportunities for host families to receive additional training that is relevant to their role.

The ethos of the school is clearly defined in the statement of boarding principles. This emphasises that staff and young people will live together 'as a big family' with the objective of nurturing 'human beings who can consider other people based on Christianity'. Inspectors observed that this approach is embedded in practice. Staff are aspirational for the young people and encourage them to do well in their studies and have a positive cultural experience of life in the United Kingdom.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Boarding school details

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