

# Wynstones

Wynstones School, Church Lane, Whaddon, Gloucester GL4 0UF  
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

Wynstones Steiner Waldorf School is a registered charity founded in 1937. It is situated in a rural location but in close proximity to Gloucester. The school provides education for children between the ages of three and 18 and is registered with the Department for Education. The school attracts pupils predominantly from the local area. There is no boarding accommodation on the school site. A small number of boarding pupils from overseas can attend for a short period, usually a term. During their stay, they are placed with host families and attend the upper school daily. The boarding provision was last inspected in January 2016.

**Inspection dates:** 27 to 29 November 2018

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>inadequate</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures, which mean that children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Date of last inspection:** 18 January 2016

## Key findings from this inspection

This boarding school is inadequate because:

- The safeguarding culture in the school is weak. Leaders, managers, staff and trustees do not protect children from harm. Statutory safeguarding guidance is not fully understood or followed.
- Leaders and managers have failed to ensure effective management of safeguarding matters. The arrangements to deal with welfare concerns are too fragmented. Too much work is undertaken in isolation and it is not coordinated effectively.
- On at least two occasions, untrained staff have restrained children. This poor practice leaves children and staff at risk.
- Leaders and managers are not held to account. Leadership and governance are ineffectual as insufficient information is shared with the trustees to enable them to accurately understand the performance of the school.
- Record-keeping is inadequate. Documents relating to child protection matters, behavioural incidents and boarding arrangements are disorganised, poorly written and often incomplete. Consequently, leaders and managers are unable to use this information effectively to keep children safe.

The boarding school's strengths:

- Host families are welcoming and provide children with good-quality accommodation. Children become part of the host family and they enjoy trips out together.
- Boarders talk positively about their time with host families. Children say that this is a good school, which has a positive sense of community.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding about private fostering arrangements. Effective links with the local authority mean that they can monitor the host family arrangements and complete required assessments and visits in a timely manner.

## **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 standards for boarding schools:

- The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. Boarders are informed who this person is, and how to contact them and they are easily accessible. Boarders are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside telephone numbers, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner, to contact in case of problems or distress (national minimum standard 2.3).
- 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 (national minimum standard 3.1).
- 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 appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (national minimum standard 6.3).
- The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (national minimum standard 11.1).
- 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 (national minimum standard 12.1).
- 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 (national minimum standard 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 (national minimum standard 13.2).
- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role (national minimum standard 13.3).
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met (national minimum standard 13.4).
- The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the well-being of pupils (national minimum standard 13.5).
- 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 (national minimum standard 15.1).
- Boarders are at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who is suitably qualified and experienced (national minimum standard 15.4).
- The school ensures that all adults providing lodgings for pupils on its behalf have undergone safeguarding training that is updated regularly as advised by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and that they understand the school's policy in relation to pupils going missing and their role in implementing that policy (national minimum standard 20.6).
- The school has a satisfactory written agreement with each adult providing lodgings for pupils on its behalf (national minimum standard 20.7).

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

Children are not kept safe at this school. Significant weaknesses in how leaders manage child protection concerns leave children at risk of harm. For example, there is a failure to respond effectively to incidents of sexualised behaviour between young children and external safeguarding agencies are not consulted.

Staff recognise changes in children's behaviour but information about these changes is not shared effectively among school leaders or, when necessary, with external professionals. Staff often work in isolation from one another and, as a result, decisions about how to help children who may be at risk are fragmented.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that host families are meeting boarders' needs effectively. Specific details about boarders' health needs and disabilities are not always routinely shared with host families before children move in. Individual healthcare plans are not reviewed, when required, to assess new information or changing needs.

Some effective planning occurs between host families and boarders before they come to stay. Children, their families and host families use internet video calling to build relationships. During the children's stay, this level of communication is maintained. Parents are also able to visit children in their host family.

Suitable arrangements are in place to consult with children about their stay with host families. However, it is not clear how leaders and managers use this information to inform practice. Children praise the support that they receive from staff within the school and say that they feel safe. However, there is no independent person provided for children who board to talk to confidentially as required in the national minimum standards.

Boarders have good opportunities during their stay to try new experiences. Host families plan activities with boarders around the children's interests. This enhances the boarders' stay. They make new friends and improve their English.

The boarding administrator has good links with the local authority with regards to private fostering arrangements. This effective working relationship means that children under 16 years who stay longer than 28 days have the required assessment by the local authority.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate**

Leaders and managers have not developed a strong safeguarding culture in the school. They do not always respond to safeguarding concerns robustly or in accordance with statutory requirements. Inspectors found too many examples where child protection concerns had not been reported to external safeguarding agencies as required.

Children are not protected because the oversight of safeguarding concerns by leaders and managers is poor. Despite having a designated safeguarding lead and deputy, there is an overall lack of leadership and ineffective coordination regarding the management of child protection matters.

Senior leaders and trustees did not know about all safeguarding concerns raised until informed by inspectors and therefore did not know if appropriate action had been taken in each case to protect the child/children involved. Despite undertaking urgent remedial work during the inspection, leaders and managers were unable to satisfy themselves and the inspection team that they are working as a safe organisation and that they are keeping children safe.

Communication regarding safeguarding concerns is poor. Staff do not work effectively together to share important information. Due to this dangerous practice, all known information about safeguarding matters is not collated to give a full understanding of potential risk to children or of what is happening with each individual case.

Safeguarding records are poorly documented and filed. Records are disorganised, poorly written and often incomplete. While records provide information about the safeguarding concern, they do not provide a comprehensive chronology of the actions taken and the outcomes and they do not include how any risk has been assessed or managed.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that all host families have completed basic child protection training. In addition, at times, boarders are cared for by extended host family members. Although disclosure and barring checks are in place, leaders and managers have not fully assessed the suitability of these arrangements and they have not ensured that these extended family members have the skills and training to meet the boarders' needs.

Leaders and managers do not maintain detailed records about behavioural incidents or circumstances when children are restrained by staff. Consequently, the oversight of these incidents is poor. This does not enable leaders and managers to determine trends and patterns. No strategies are used to support the children without the need for staff to hold them. On at least two occasions, staff who do not have training in restraint have restrained children.

Leaders and managers took effective action following the previous inspection to review health and safety. Health and safety practices, including fire safety, are now sufficient to promote the well-being of children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

Leadership and governance are inadequate. Insufficient information is shared with the trustees about how the school is keeping children safe. Consequently, the trustees do not have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and they are ineffective in holding leaders to account.

Leaders and managers do not provide staff with a good, supportive environment for them to develop. Staff responsible for boarding and safeguarding children do not receive regular, formal supervision. Senior leaders fail to hold these staff to account, to question their practice and to help them to develop.

Work undertaken by the designated safeguarding lead, guardians, pastoral care and special educational needs is often completed in isolation and not coordinated effectively. This lack of a joined-up approach puts children at risk as no one person has overall oversight of the support that a child requires.

Records relating to children and host families are poorly maintained. Poor record-keeping is a common weakness seen throughout the inspection and limits the ability of leaders and managers to monitor the effectiveness of their services.

The boarding administrator undertakes the required checks of host families to ensure that they are safely recruited and provide suitable accommodation. Host families feel sufficiently supported by the boarding administrator.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences 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 whom 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**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC034618

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mrs Marianne Law-Lindberg

**Type of school:** Boarding school

**Telephone number:** 01452 429220

**Email address:** college@wynstones.com

## **Inspectors**

Nicola Lownds: social care inspector

Kerry Fell: social care inspector

Nicola Bennet: Her Majesty's Inspector social care



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