

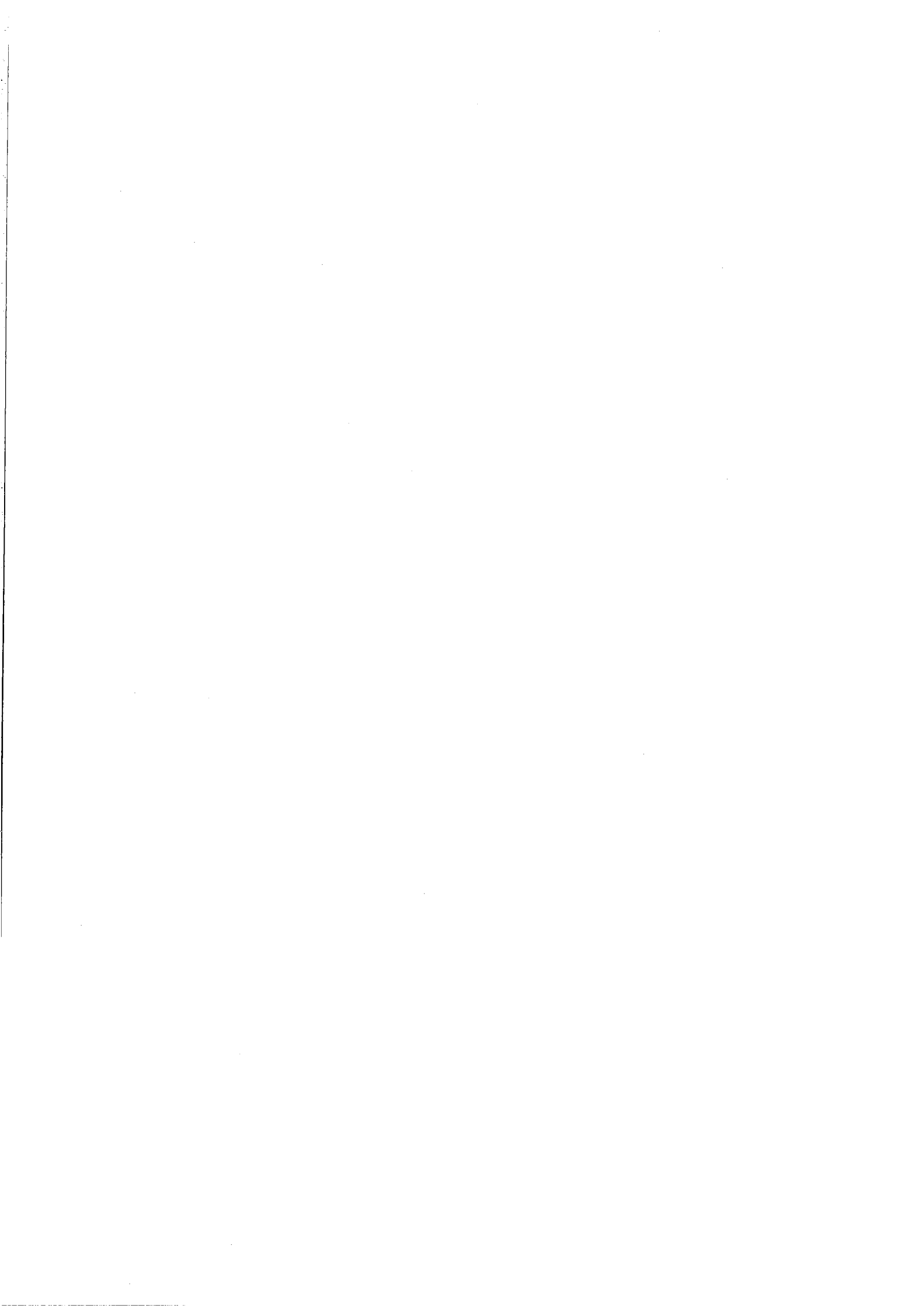
The Claymore School logo consists of two horizontal bars of equal length, one above the other, positioned to the left of the school's name.

Clayesmore School

Inspection report for Boarding School

Unique reference number	SC026903
Inspection date	01/10/2009
Inspector	Clare Davies
Type of inspection	Key

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Nominated person	Martin Cooke
Date of last inspection	01/11/2006



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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Clayesmore School is a day and boarding school with approximately 420 pupils. A prep school, pre-prep and nursery are located on the same site allowing children to move through the schools from the ages of two and a half to 18 years. Based on Christian principles, the school chapel is integral to school life. Pupils of other faiths are welcomed as the school embraces diversity. There are approximately 240 boarders at the co-educational senior school. The boarding accommodation is made up of five houses, two of these are for girls. The dining room, sports centre and other areas on the site are shared with the schools for younger pupils. The school has extensive recreational facilities and grounds; it is located in a Dorset village near to Shaftesbury

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was an announced inspection to assess the school against the national minimum standards for boarding schools. All but two of the standards have been met and many have been exceeded. Pastoral care is outstanding and a strength of the school where boarders feel safe, cared for and valued. All staff contribute to the Clayesmore community and provide, what parents and boarders describe as, 'a family atmosphere'. Boarders not only feel well cared for by the staff but also by other boarders. Boarding houses accommodating pupils aged 12-18 years foster a family environment where older boarders act as mentors to younger ones and create a strong sense of belonging. Boarders and their parents express very high levels of satisfaction about the pastoral care and support with individual needs. The medical centre provides excellent care and good health is promoted across the school. Strong relationships exist between boarders and school staff based on mutual respect and trust. Good behaviour is indicative of these good relationships. Some risk assessments relating to boarding houses need to be more comprehensive and separate bathroom facilities need to be identified for staff and visitors in each boarding house.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection in 2005 the school has made considerable improvements in relation to staff recruitment with robust procedures in place to promote the safeguarding of boarders. Staff receive good support through line management arrangements and comprehensive school policies. There are fire risk assessments for each boarding house and the school regularly reviews the crisis management plan.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Across the school the health and wellbeing of boarders is promoted exceptionally well. The personal, social and health education programme is delivered through many avenues such as the designated teacher, tutor groups, the medical centre, boarding house staff, the Chaplain, the learning support department and visiting speakers. Sensitive issues are addressed by staff with the skills to deliver this effectively. Advice and guidance is provided at age appropriate levels and due to this subject area being so well integrated across the school, staff are responsive to current issues and can provide support as matters arise in addition to the timetabled sessions.

Medical care is provided by qualified nurses 24 hours a day and this exceeds the minimum standard. A dedicated medical centre operates at a professional level for the school community supported by a local surgery with a GP visiting the school four days per week. The confidentiality of boarders' health and medical needs is given the utmost respect and arrangements are in place to promote privacy of appointments and treatment. Boarders receive appointments by email or in a sealed envelope with efforts made to offer appointments during break times to avoid the need to miss lessons. Clear written records are maintained of any treatment and medication; there are plans to computerise such records this term. All medication is held at the medical centre to reduce administration by boarding houses.

Boarding house staff have a small stock of pain relief medication that they can issue in the late evening and overnight if required; boarding staff report that they usually seek advice from the medical centre before administering any pain relief. This practice promotes the safe storage and administration of medication with qualified nurses taking prime responsibility. Parents' consent for over the counter medication to be given to their child, along with permission for prescribed medication and any emergency treatment. To respond to any sports related injuries the school increases the number of nurses available on duty during sports afternoons and match days and has arranged for St John's Ambulance Service to be present during rugby matches. All staff are trained in first aid with regular refreshers to update their skills. First aid training is also available to boarders as a skill they can learn and receive a certificate for. In addition to medical attention and treatment the medical centre is a welcoming place to seek guidance and support with any social or emotional worries. Boarders and boarding staff report that they feel confident in approaching the medical centre for support and how they value the 24 hour availability.

The catering staff have an excellent understanding of what makes a balanced and nutritious meal and put this into practice offering an extensive range of food. All main meals are taken in the school dining room where there is always a choice of main dishes with vegetarian options, pasta bar, salad bar and jacket potatoes. Puddings, yoghurts and a selection of fresh fruit are always available to follow. Boarders enjoy the food and appreciate the many choices. Very few negative comments were received about the food offered and these were related to personal

preferences. The catering team meet with representatives from pupil groups to discuss any changes to the menus and food available in boarding houses. The boarding houses have small kitchen areas where hot drinks and toast can be made. One of the after school activities involves gardening and pupils will be making soups with the vegetables that they have grown. To promote good hygiene and reduce the spread of any infections, dispensers of hand sanitizer are located at the entrance to the dining room for everyone to use.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders report that there is very little bullying behaviour as the school does not tolerate it and supports pupils in getting along together. One boarder reported that he chose this school because it has a reputation where there is no bullying and that has been his experience so far. Older boarders reported that they wouldn't stand and watch someone being bullied: they would intervene. The strength of relationships amongst boarders, particularly through the year groups is supported through vertical boarding. Sixth form boarders report how they enjoy mixing with younger boarders and the younger ones enjoy the older sibling roles that the sixth form provide. All new boarders in year 9 are allocated a lower sixth form boarder from their boarding house as a mentor and this structure works extremely well in developing positive relationships. The safety and welfare of boarders is given a high priority and all staff have received training on how to respond to any safeguarding concerns they may have. The school has liaised appropriately with the local authority safeguarding team for advice and training. The safeguarding policy provides clear guidance and in addition, support staff are issued with a handy pocket sized card reminding them of the key points and contact telephone numbers.

Good behaviour is encouraged and praised with the award of credits, commendations and appointments to senior positions such as head of house. To promote consistency of response to any inappropriate behaviour sanctions are only issued by senior staff and such actions are recorded on a central log. Small matters such as being late or untidy, or showing a lack of manners are corrected by all staff, though any persistence in this type of behaviour is reported to the senior staff to address as a formal sanction. There is a disciplinary ladder for serious offences and these are clearly listed in the pupil calendar. Pastoral care plays an important role in responding to any misbehaviour as staff try and identify where a boarder needs support. For example, if a boarder persistently fails to complete their work in the evenings because they have mislaid books and equipment, the learning support department will meet with them to develop strategies for personal time management and organisational skills. Boarders recognise the support that this school provides and consider that school rules and sanctions are fair. The pupil calendar invites boarders and day pupils to speak to the senior staff if they feel that they have been treated unfairly. The boarders' complaints procedure is available in the calendar listing key people to approach in school along with contact details for external support. The parent handbook includes a complaints procedure for their use.

There are systems in place for the prevention and detection of fire. All boarders know what to do in the event of hearing the alarm and have practised evacuation from the boarding houses. The majority of staff have received training in fire safety and a contractor ensures that the equipment and systems are routinely serviced.

— Safer recruitment practices are adopted; this is reflected in the robust recruitment procedures. All staff have clearance through the Criminal Records Bureau and references are received and verified before employment commences. The school has shown commitment to ensuring that sound recruitment procedures are followed across all departments by arranging training in safer recruitment for at least 11 staff with responsibilities for new appointments. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that visitors are always escorted around the school, while parents are expected to sign the visitors' book in each boarding house to account for everyone should the fire alarm be raised.

Health and safety issues are supported with sound policies and procedures that are monitored by senior staff. Safety matters are reinforced with boarders through activities, fire drills, crossing the road through the village, use of transport, testing of electrical equipment and areas of school that are out of bounds. An excellent system of reporting a fault or hazard ensures that maintenance matters are responded to promptly and senior staff can readily monitor progress and identify hazardous areas of the school. Risk assessments are in place for the many activities, the environment and off site trips. The assessments relating to off site boarding houses do not identify all the risks and not all assessments are signed and dated.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There is an extensive range of activities for boarders to enjoy with, for example, up to 25 clubs on offer on a Tuesday afternoon. The school's facilities include a sports centre with swimming pool, a theatre, music department, art department, Combined Cadet Force, all-weather pitches and numerous playing fields. Off site activities include horse riding, golf, community service in the village and elements of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. To encourage new boarders in Year 9, there is a compulsory carousel of activities for a period of four weeks before moving onto another one. In addition to sporting activities there are opportunities to learn skills in life saving and first aid with certificates on completion of the courses. Boarders thoroughly enjoy the diverse range of activities and opportunities to try new things.

The pastoral care available is outstanding and a strength that comes from every corner of the school. Staff from all departments recognise their contribution to the boarding life ensuring that boarders have a happy and safe experience at Clayesmore School. Communication across the school is strong, supported by regular meetings and clear line management responsibilities. The Learning Support Centre is a central resource to the school, offering support and guidance to pupils and staff. Support may be given with learning, organisational skills and extra study to keep up with their class. By being such an integrated department in the school there is no

stigma attached to receiving input from the Learning Support Centre. Individual educational plans act as useful documents to identify what support is required and how it can be delivered. This provides useful information to teachers and boarding house staff.

— The head and his wife are actively involved in school life and ensure that they are available to boarders and staff. The leadership of the school promotes a family environment and traditionally provides well for Her Majesty's Armed Forces families with many school staff having personal connections with the Armed Forces. Boarders report strong relationships with house staff, matrons, tutors and senior staff. There are opportunities to talk with adults who are less involved in the boarding houses such as the Chaplain, the medical centre staff and independent visitors. Weekends offer a balance of free time and structured activity that suits the boarders; one boarder said 'at weekends in particular, we are just one big family'. Parents report very high levels of satisfaction with the pastoral care with comments such as; 'a relaxed family atmosphere' and 'There is very much a feeling that my son is part of the Clayesmore and boarding house family while away from his real home'. 'An excellent care team- including the cleaner. Very good relations/support from older boys to younger boys'. 'First class pastoral care, all individual needs and concerns are treated with utmost importance'.

There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities and an environment where there is no inappropriate discrimination. The diverse range of pupils with a wide academic ability range supports how this school values individual contribution and celebrates difference. Excellent support from the Learning Support Centre promotes an inclusive curriculum along with boarders from overseas who receive support with studying English as an additional language. A welcome letter is produced in their first language, listing school routines and explaining words particular to the school such as 'prep' and 'line'. Individual language lessons are delivered to fit in with their timetable to avoid missing key subjects. The co-ordinator provides support to school staff as well as pupils from overseas by providing guidance on cultural differences and learning styles. All areas of the curriculum and recreational activities are accessible to all regardless of gender and ability. The school has an accessibility plan identifying areas that have restricted access due to the age of the buildings.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There are many forums for listening to and obtaining the views of boarders; house committees, headmaster's forum, social committees, a dining room committee and the school magazine. As a result of listening to boarders, mobile telephones are no longer collected in at night as boarders are trusted to use them responsibly. In response to requests, more fruit is available in the boarding houses and there has been modifications to the dress code. Boarders report that they feel they can have their say and contribute to the development of the school. Consultation has also involved selection of soft furnishings and colours for redecoration and there are plans to involve the boarders with the design of a new uniform.

