

# Royal Grammar School

Royal Grammar School High Wycombe

Royal Grammar School, Amersham Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 6QT

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

This school is a selective maintained school with academy status for boys aged 11 to 19 years. At the time of the inspection there were 1,394 boys on roll and 69 boarders. Accommodation for boarders is on the school site.

**Inspection dates:** 8 to 10 October 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The boarding school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Date of last inspection:** 14 March 2017

## Inspection judgements

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

Boarders live in a supportive and inclusive community, which enriches their experiences and positively influences their development. Professional and committed boarding staff work collaboratively, focus on the needs of individual boarders and provide the appropriate levels of assistance for boarders to succeed.

Support for boarders' academic progress is extremely strong. Highly effective systems are in place to promote high achievement. Striving to achieve to the best of their ability is inherent in the culture of boarding life. Academic mentoring from older boarders, and boarders helping each other with school work, is routine. This collaborative approach, alongside structured study and homework times with the benefit of academic staff, results in boarders outperforming day students in exam results.

Boarders appreciate this structure, which helps them concentrate on their academic work but which also enables them to fully experience the wide range of activities on offer. The co-curricular opportunities extend boarders' social experiences, broaden their interests and enable them to achieve personal growth in addition to academic success. A parent commented that they are delighted to see how their son is 'developing as an individual, including the fact that he is learning skills that will stand him in good stead for the future'. The sixth-form curriculum in school includes an extensive range of important topics which provide students with the knowledge, awareness and understanding of issues relevant to young adults. However, boarders do not have structured independence plans to enable them to acquire practical daily living skills.

Boarding staff value the views of boarders. Boarders know that they can approach any member of boarding staff at any time if they have worries or concerns and staff will respond appropriately. Consultation with boarders on day-to-day matters is highly effective. Through various forums, such as the boarding council, food council and digital council, boarders put forward their opinions and suggestions. Managers and staff are responsive and consider boarders' views, demonstrating to boarders that they are listened to and their opinions are important.

Boarders are extremely positive about their residential experience. They thrive in what they describe as a family-like, friendly, 'home away from home' environment, in which they get the advice and guidance they need from the staff. Boarding staff know each boarder very well, know their strengths and vulnerabilities and recognise when additional support is required. Parents commented on how much their sons enjoy boarding, how boarding is 'bringing out the best in my son' and that 'staff are extremely committed to providing an excellent rounded education'.

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

An ethos of safeguarding students is embedded in all aspects of the school. Led by a skilled and experienced designated safeguarding lead, the team of safeguarding officers is proactive and responds effectively to all concerns raised. Appropriate referrals are made to external safeguarding agencies when necessary.

Safeguarding training for staff is wide-ranging and frequently updated so that they have the necessary knowledge and awareness of the current risks that boarders may face and are able to implement protective measures. All students benefit from information, guidance and advice on a wide range of safeguarding matters.

Because there is a focus on treating every student as an individual and responding to their specific needs, support and guidance systems across the school are wide-ranging. The tutorial system is central to the pastoral care provided for all students, with boarding staff adding an extra dimension to the support for boarders' health and well-being. Boarding welfare plans clearly identify boarders' particular needs. Boarding staff implement, in close collaboration with parents, well-considered, sensitive strategies to help boarders develop and achieve their goals.

A strong focus on nurturing boarders is clear. Relationships between boarding staff and boarders are warm, genuine and meaningful, developed from a foundation of mutual respect. Behaviour is excellent. Because of an emphasis on promoting positive behaviour by recognising and celebrating boarders' achievements and constructive role modelling, few behaviour incidents occur. Boarders support each other, and are tolerant and considerate.

Structures, routines and boundaries help boarders develop a sense of safety, protection and trust. Boarders respond to the support that the staff offer and know that they can approach boarding staff at any time if they have any concerns or worries. The well-being of boarders is the highest priority for boarding staff.

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

Ambitious and inspirational leadership is reflected in a culture of high expectation, in which all boarding staff strive to support and motivate boarders to achieve to the best of their ability. Leaders and managers are highly competent. Boarding staff share a common purpose of providing an excellent nurturing experience for boarders to enhance their academic progress, promote success and develop their individuality.

Boarders respond to an ethos of high aspiration. Boarding leaders and boarding tutors provide the appropriate level of guidance and influence. As boarders move through the school, they become role models for younger boarders who emulate their success, recognising that the support network provided in boarding helps them achieve their goals.

Boarding staff are appropriately trained for their role. Through the appraisal system, regular boarding staff meetings and continuous informal guidance from the director of boarding, staff receive effective support. In addition, a new system of supervision for boarding house staff is in place. This provides them with opportunities to reflect on and review their practice. This new form of support is appreciated and valued by staff as part of a continuous endeavour to improve the experience for boarders.

Because there is a definite non-complacent approach, leaders and managers seek out opportunities to improve boarding practice. They visit and collaborate with other schools, undertake detailed self-assessment and consult constructively with parents and boarders in the drive for continuous improvement.

Parents of boarders are extremely positive about how boarding is benefiting their sons. During the inspection, parents commented on how boarding has helped to develop their sons' independence, confidence, maturity and resilience. Parents recognise that boarding has 'a culture of learning' in which boarders are 'constantly encouraged to work hard and achieve their full potential'. Parents also commented on how the boarding provision is 'extremely well led'.

## **What does the boarding school need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- Consider implementing independence plans for boarders as they approach leaving the school.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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:** SC049244

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Philip Wayne

**Type of school:** boarding school

**Telephone number:** 01494 524 955

**Email address:** dmc@rgshw.com

## **Inspectors**

Jan Hunnam, social care inspector (lead)  
Suzy Lemmy, social care inspector



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

No.

© Crown copyright 2019