

Ripon Grammar School

North Yorkshire Council

Ripon Grammar School, 16 Clothholme Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 2DG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Ripon Grammar School is a maintained boarding school for 921 children aged from 11 to 18 years. The boarding accommodation is provided in two houses: School House for boys and Johnson House for girls. Between the two houses, there is capacity for 105 boarders. At the time of the inspection, 95 children were boarders. The school is located close to the city centre and has good access to local services and facilities.

The school has a range of facilities for the boarders to enjoy, including a swimming pool and sports centre. On occasion, these facilities are available for lease by community groups.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 May 2024

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: 8 February 2022

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say that they like staying at the boarding school and that it is like one big family. Children who are new to boarding at the school say that they are made to feel very welcome and that they come to visit before they move in. One child said that it is 'a very good place to be'. All the children said that they like the school because of the friendships that they have.

Improvements have been made to the living areas across the two boarding houses. Children now have access to a music room where they can play the piano and drums. This means that children are living in an environment that provides them with a space where they can flourish and have fun.

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the reporting and recording of the children's medication processes. The new system is accessible for all staff across boarding and the school. This means that children are getting the medication they need when they need it. Leaders have shared their medication systems with other settings as a benchmark of good practice.

The children are focused on their education and want to do well. Their educational needs are supported by boarding staff. Teachers from the school form part of the boarding team. They help the children with their revision and homework, which improves the children's academic achievement. Children identify that being in the boarding provision helps them with their schoolwork and their focus on homework.

Children enjoy a broad range of activities, including football, cricket and badminton. This increases their confidence and physical fitness. Most children can also leave the school in the evening and will spend their time visiting the local city. This helps children to manage their time independently.

The new chef meets regularly with the children and their parents and the head of boarding. This is to hear what suggestions boarders have regarding the food that they would like. There is a positive willingness to ensure that the boarders enjoy the food provided, and, when needed, changes will be made to accommodate the children's requests.

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

The approach to safeguarding is thorough. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is knowledgeable about the risks that children face, and strategies to reduce those risks are known to the wider DSL team and staff team. Staff undertake annual training on safeguarding matters and receive refresher sessions during the year to keep their knowledge up to date.

Children's risk assessments provide staff with clear actions to follow to reduce their risk of harm. Children rarely engage in risk-taking behaviour, such as alcohol misuse or going missing, and are not subject to exploitation. Children feel safe in the school and are generally safe.

The safeguarding system is well used by the DSL team and the wider staff team. Information is factual and contains relevant details for safe decisions to be made for children. Open cases are closed off when a concern has passed, so that open cases are only those that are active. This makes it easy to navigate the system and check for information about a child.

Behaviour is very positive in this school and there has been no use of physical intervention. The school has moved away from consequences as the main response to unwanted behaviour and now takes a more restorative approach, which appears to work well. However, behaviours such as alcohol misuse or derogatory comments may attract consequences that might include being suspended from boarding.

There are no concerns with health and safety. Any issues are reported to the maintenance team and are addressed in order of severity. There is no evidence of outstanding repair work required in the boarding houses, which are generally well maintained.

The single central record (SCR) is well maintained, and all checks are carried out on time. It is easy to see teaching staff, boarding staff and those who do both. Governors, contractors and other staff are all included in the SCR, with the correct checks being carried out. Staff do not begin work until satisfactory checks have been carried out, and references are received and verified when required. This means that children are being cared for by people who have been appropriately vetted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The head of boarding is supported by an enthusiastic team of managers who all have high aspirations for the children. They recognise that supporting the children to have fun and time out from their homework and revision is important. This is because it reduces the pressure that the children put on themselves and allows them to spend time with their friends doing the things that they enjoy.

The head of boarding knows the strengths and weakness of the school. She is quick to address issues that arise and has put systems in place to ensure that information is shared from the boarding provision to school. This wraparound approach means that information is always shared and that children receive a consistent approach from school to boarding.

Staff told inspectors that they feel very much supported by the head of boarding. They also said that there is an open-door culture. This means that staff feel comfortable in sharing any concerns or worries that they may have.

The school is very well supported by the governing body. Members of the governing body are very knowledgeable, which helps them to challenge and support school leaders. Governors visit the residential provision and know how well it is performing. Governors provide challenge to the head of boarding, which helps the provision to better meet the children's needs.

Staff receive the training that they need to perform well and meet the children's ever-changing needs. Training goes beyond the core learning so that it gives staff specific knowledge to help them provide effective care.

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: SC007938

Headteacher: Johnathan Webb

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector

Jane Titley, Social Care Inspector

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