



# **Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales**

## **Care Standards Act 2000**

### **Inspection Report**

#### **Monmouth School**

Monmouth

**Type of Inspection – Focused**  
**Dates of inspection – 27 & 28 November 2013**  
**Date of publication – 8 April 2014**

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## Summary

### About the service

Monmouth School is an Independent School that provides boarding services for boys aged 11- 18yrs. The Headmaster is Dr Steven Connors and the Head of Boarding is Mr Kingsley Jones.

### What type of inspection was carried out?

The inspection focussed on the Quality of Life that pupils experienced at the school. An announced visit was made with two inspectors spending two days at the school, with the majority of the time being spent with pupils.

The information for this report was gathered from:

- Self assessment
- Conversation with pupils
- Conversation with staff
- Observation of practice.

### What does the service do well?

The service provides pupils with security, safety and support with personal issues. There is a wide range of sporting, leisure and social opportunities provided for pupils at evening and weekends.

### What has improved since the last inspection?

- Appointment of a dedicated Head of Boarding
- Opening of the house for senior pupils
- Introduction of a separate Boarders forum meeting for senior and junior boys.
- Introduction of Peer Mentor's scheme, providing additional level of pastoral support.
- Moving junior boarders to Chapel House, where meals are provided in house creating a more homely atmosphere for the junior boys.
- Series of meetings in relation to boarding matters.

### What needs to be done to improve the service?

No specific recommendations were identified on this inspection; however the effectiveness of recent initiatives, including the proposed self assessment of boarding provision, will be monitored on future visits.

## Quality of life

Quality of life was the primary focus of this inspection.

Pupils were unanimous that boarding at the school was a positive experience. There was an ethos of mutual care and respect in existence between pupils and staff. Pupils had opportunities to influence and change aspects of their boarding routines. Effective systems were in place to support pupils with their personal and learning issues. A wide range of sports and social opportunities were available to them with opportunities to follow special interests and acquire new skills. Pupils were particularly positive about the opportunities they had to interact with their peers and were equally positive about the approachability of staff within the boarding houses.

Pupils feel listened to and believe their views are valued. Pupils stated both individually and collectively that they were able to express their views about all aspects of boarding through the school council and other year and house groups. Pupils said that they had brought about a change in the routine for the day when the weekly church service was held. Until recently, pupils attended the service and then went to the dining hall for supper: this led to long queues at the serving counters. Following their comments arrangements were made for the service to be held after pupils had taken their evening meal. Pupils were positive about this outcome. We observed a Housemasters meeting and saw evidence of pupil's views being taken into account in terms of the selection of drama pieces that would be more interesting to them. It was also clear from the same meeting that pupils were to be consulted on the criteria for making certain house and school awards.

We noted that pupils were active, positively occupied and stimulated. After school pupils had opportunities to participate in various sporting and social activities. Rowing and rugby were available on one evening during the inspection visit. Pupils reported that there was plenty to do which contributed to their enjoyment of boarding. Pupils in the junior house had an evening of decorating cakes on a Christmas theme. They were seen to work in pairs and there was much laughter and enjoyment of their creative efforts and ensuing competition. Pupils who were engaged in another activity were invited to be judges of the cakes on their return to the house. Photo records of pupils' activities and achievements showed an earlier cooking activity.

We noted that pupils were encouraged to look after themselves and supported to be fit and well. As already noted pupils had ample opportunity to participate in sporting activities during the evenings and weekends. The school now had a senior house where pupils in the second year in the sixth form lived. They had individual study bedrooms and had kitchen facilities that enabled them to prepare their own meals. The pupils told us that this gave them a good opportunity to prepare for independent living after leaving school. Matrons supported pupils in attending routine medical screenings, cared for those who were ill and oversaw their medical needs, including visits to the surgery/hospital.

We noted that pupils experience appropriate, responsive care from staff that have an up to date understanding of their individual needs and preferences. Pupils said that they felt confident about and at ease approaching staff with issues of concern to them. Most said that although the Housemasters were also teachers it did not inhibit their ability to discuss personal issues with them. All pupils said they remained in contact with their families and therefore could discuss personal issues with them. A pupil said he had

experienced bullying but that the housemaster had acted promptly and the bullying ceased. Pupils were aware that bullying was an aspect of school life but they had open discussions about the behaviour and associated impact it can have on individuals. Pupils were aware of the pupil mentoring system now in place. Senior pupils had received training for this role and they were clear about the extent of their role and when they needed to refer issues to house masters.

## Quality of staffing

Quality of life was the primary focus of this inspection.

From conversation with pupils it was evident that they were clear about the role of the Housemasters and Matrons. Pupils had confidence in the boarding house staff, said there was always an adult available and that “there is always someone available to talk to”. Pupils believed that staff were interested in their personal issues as well as their academic development. Pupils were seen to be relaxed with staff in the boarding houses and were treated with warmth and respect.

During the inspection visit at least two adults were on duty each evening in the main houses. Gap students provided additional support in the junior house, whilst only one member of staff was sometimes available in the senior house. Pupils confirmed that this was the usual staffing levels and did not compromise the care and support they received. Pupils in the junior house queried the need for all of them to participate in some outings or sports. The Head of Boarding explained that whilst the house was adequately staffed, there were not enough to allow each pupil to follow their preferred activity at all times and that pupils could not be in the house without an adult. The pupils accepted the explanation with one saying that it did not happen often.

## Quality of leadership and management

Quality of life was the primary focus of this inspection.

Pupils indicated that they were satisfied with the support and assistance they received. They were clear about the management structure and who they should approach if they had concerns. In addition to pupil fora and surveys, parental feedback and staff meetings, the school was in the process of developing a self-assessment process for the boarding houses.

## Quality of environment

Quality of life was the primary focus of this inspection.

Pupils said that they had adequate space to store their belongings, comfortable beds and satisfactory bathroom facilities. Good housekeeping standards were noted. It was stated that there was an ongoing programme of maintenance, redecoration and refurbishment. Pupils said that they had room to complete their studies with older pupils having single study bedrooms. Communal rooms were available in the boarding houses and pupils could access other recreational spaces and facilities at the school in the evenings and weekends.



**How we inspect and report on services** We conduct two types of inspection; baseline and focussed. Both consider the experience of people using services.

- **Baseline inspections** assess whether the registration of a service is justified and whether the conditions of registration are appropriate. For most services, we carry out these inspections every three years. Exceptions are registered child minders, out of school care, sessional care, crèches and open access provision, which are every four years.

At these inspections we check whether the service has a clear, effective Statement of Purpose and whether the service delivers on the commitments set out in its Statement of Purpose. In assessing whether registration is justified inspectors check that the service can demonstrate a history of compliance with regulations.

- **Focussed inspections** consider the experience of people using services and we will look at compliance with regulations when poor outcomes for people using services are identified. We carry out these inspections in between baseline inspections. Focussed inspections will always consider the quality of life of people using services and may look at other areas.

Baseline and focussed inspections may be scheduled or carried out in response to concerns.

Inspectors use a variety of methods to gather information during inspections. These may include;

- Talking with people who use services and their representatives
- Talking to staff and the manager
- Looking at documentation
- Observation of staff interactions with people and of the environment
- Comments made within questionnaires returned from people who use services, staff and health and social care professionals

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