

## St. Mary's Prep School School Care Accommodation Service

St. Mary's School  
Abbey Park  
Melrose  
TD6 9LN

Telephone: 01896 822517

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 16 March 2017

**Service provided by:**  
St. Mary's School, Melrose

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003590

**Care service number:**  
CS2005110882

## About the service

St. Mary's School is an independent, co-educational, day and boarding preparatory school located in Melrose. Its conditions of registration are as follows:

1. To provide a school care accommodation service to a maximum of 24 pupils at any one time.
2. The school care accommodation service will be provided during the school terms.
3. To comply with the current staffing schedule dated September 2006 which must be displayed together with the certificate.

Included on its website is the following:

"Our aim today is to continue to provide St. Mary's boys and girls with an educational experience as extraordinary as the one John Hamilton envisaged, but as fit for the 21st century and as valuable in our day as was his, over 100 years ago".

"In the Boarding House the happiness and welfare of the children is hugely important. We strongly believe boarding is an integral part of St Mary's School; greatly enhancing the ethos and strength of the community within the school. Children can begin boarding in Form 3".

## What people told us

We spoke with pupils informally during our visit. This was done with small groups and individuals. All the pupils we spoke with told us that they felt safe and comfortable in the boarding house and around the school campus at St. Mary's. They said that they enjoyed the different activities they could access while boarding and that there were opportunities to get help with school work if this was needed.

Some pupils said they boarded certain nights each week as this suited their family. Others chose specific nights because they could take part in special events while some chose their time to coincide with duty shifts of staff they had a really good relationship with.

The pupils we consulted consistently said that staff listened to them asked for their views about different aspects of boarding. This included choosing events and activities as well as making requests about who they shared rooms with.

## Self assessment

A comprehensive self assessment was returned prior to the inspection. It provided information and examples of what the service believed they did well, and areas which they had identified for improvement.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

## What the service does well

St. Mary's provides a welcoming, inclusive boarding experience for the pupils and families who use it.

During our inspection we saw that pupils were all well known to staff who treated them as individuals and were aware of any needs and preferences they had. Routines were in place which suited pupils and enabled them to fully participate in the range of activities as well as providing them with access to opportunities for academic work and links to the local community.

Pupils we spoke with told us that they liked the staff who looked after them and that they could always speak to staff about things if they wished. They described different events which had taken place and were proud of their involvement in sporting and cultural programs, fixtures and performances.

We heard from pupils that they enjoyed boarding as it gave them opportunities to spend time with their friends and share a range of experiences. There were very few weekly boarders but those who boarded on a routine and regular basis had their own space in the boarding house which had allowed them to personalise that area and use it in ways which matched their personal preferences. Staff matched pupils who were sharing rooms so that friends were able to share with each other as often as possible. Pupils told us that they could ask to be moved to different rooms if they wished and that staff would take their requests seriously and comply wherever this was feasible.

At the time of the inspection visit there were no pupils who had specific care needs which required extensive plans, additional resource allocation or staff training. A small number of pupils used prescribed medication and there was a system in place to record this. Since the last inspection the medication systems had been reviewed and improved to ensure that storage was safe and administration records were properly kept. This was also the case for occasional medication for minor ailments. In all cases, staff would routinely consult parents. Staff were also aware of any food allergies and ensured that this information was shared with catering staff.

Links were in place between the School and local health agencies so that access for boarding pupils was clear and direct. Where necessary, in the event of accidents or sports injuries, staff used local A&E facilities which were nearby.

Since the last inspection, there had been changes to the staff team and adjustments to deployment hours for others. New members of staff had worked well to get to know the pupils, their families and how best to provide positive experiences for them. We saw very good evidence of positive relationships between pupils and staff which helped the pupils to feel safe and comfortable in the boarding house. Individual staff had developed their roles within the boarding environment and this meant that pupils knew which member of the team to speak to about different activities, prep and any other arrangement. Some staff had also brought and developed particular activities or hobbies which enabled pupils to try new experiences and develop different skills.

During the inspection visit we observed staff interacting very positively with pupils. Each member of the team had their own style of providing supervision in a way which meant that routines and structure was adhered to but there was an overall sense of fun and enjoyment.

We spoke individually and informally with a range of staff involved with boarding pupils. There was a very good level of skills and experience of providing care and support to boarding pupils. This meant that the staff were able to work well as a team and meet the needs of all the pupils. It also meant that if any pupil was unwell or unhappy about something it would be observed and appropriate action would be promptly taken. It also meant that the range of ages and backgrounds of staff provided a positive mix of adults for pupils to relate to.

Since the last inspection, the School had put in place a development program for the physical environment for boarding pupils. This had led to some changes to the use of specific rooms in the boarding house such as the space and facilities used for those who were unwell. Accommodation areas for some staff had also been improved. The introduction of new bedroom furniture had meant that pupils had better storage space and there was an improvement in aspects of privacy. A plan was in place to further develop the boarding environment with the use of other premises. At the time of our visit, work on this was starting and we will comment on this in future inspection reports when it is completed.

## What the service could do better

While staff spoke positively about being able to share information effectively through emails and regular meetings, this will become more difficult with the extension of the boarding environment. The School is currently investigating different formats of information systems and we will assess the outcome of this at future inspections.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
24 Feb 2016	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
27 Sep 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
30 Apr 2009	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent Not assessed Not assessed Not assessed
16 Sep 2008	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good

## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.