

BSA Group Ofsted SCCIF assessment toolkit

The following highlights benchmarks for a school to be “good” against the requirements of the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF).

The criteria for an “outstanding” response have been included at the end of this toolkit to support members in their efforts to provide excellent care, support and service to their students.

For more information on SCCIF inspections, please visit: [Social care common inspection framework \(SCCIF\): boarding schools and residential special schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif)

The overall experiences and progress of children

Item	Evaluation	Evidence
Children are enabled to build trusted and secure relationships with the adults who are looking after them. Staff know the children well, listen to them, spend time with them, protect them and promote their welfare. Children are able to develop an appropriate sense of belonging. They make progress and have a range of positive experiences.		
Staff understand children’s preferred methods of communication, and consistently support and promote these methods so that children can participate fully in their daily lives.		
Children, including those who communicate non-verbally, are supported to actively participate in day-to-day and more complex decisions about their lives, as appropriate. They are sensitively helped to understand where it may not be possible to act on their wishes and		

<p>why other action is taken that is in their best interests.</p> <p>Children have access to, and are actively encouraged to involve, an independent advocate and, where appropriate, an independent visitor</p>		
<p>Children know how to complain. The school's complaints policy is easy to understand, accessible and child-focused.</p> <p>Children understand what has happened as result of their complaint.</p> <p>Their complaints are treated seriously and responded to clearly. Urgent action is taken, and practice and services improve accordingly.</p>		
<p>Children attend school or other educational provision; they are learning and making good progress from their starting points.</p> <p>Staff are ambitious for children and support them to attend and do well in their education.</p> <p>There is effective liaison between the boarding provision, teaching staff and headteacher.</p>		
<p>Children enjoy access to a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities, including activities in the local community, as appropriate, irrespective of any disability they may have.</p> <p>They are able to participate in after-school activities, community-based activities and school trips and holidays.</p> <p>They are supported to engage in faith-based activities if they wish.</p>		
<p>Children are supported to develop their independence according to their individual needs, while protecting themselves from being in unsafe situations or with unsafe people.</p> <p>They are being prepared for adulthood and have opportunities to develop daily living skills.</p>		

<p>Children are in good health or are being helped to improve their health or to manage lifelong conditions. Their health needs (including their mental and sexual health needs when this is appropriate for their age and understanding) are identified.</p> <p>They have access to local health services when they need them. Arrangements for managing medication are safe and effective and promote independence wherever possible.</p> <p>Staff develop effective relationships with health professionals to promote good health.</p>		
<p>Specialist help is made available according to the individual needs of children, including those who live away from their 'home' authority. The help is available as soon as it is needed, at the intensity required and for as long as it is required. If services are not available, or children are waiting for a long time for help, the school is proactive in challenging and escalating concerns with the placing authority, health authority or parents.</p>		
<p>Any specific type or model of care delivered or commissioned by the school is provided by staff who are suitably trained, experienced, qualified and supervised. The benefits of this to children are clearly evident. The care is reviewed regularly.</p>		
<p>Children who are new to the boarding provision are welcomed sensitively and with careful and considered planning. When children leave the school, staff promote positive endings. When endings are unplanned, the welfare and well-being of children remain paramount, and staff act at all times with this in mind.</p>		

<p>Children develop skills and strategies to manage their own conflicts and difficult feelings through developing positive relationships with staff.</p> <p>There are clear, consistent and appropriate boundaries for children.</p>		
<p>Children are treated with dignity and respect.</p> <p>They experience care and help that are sensitive and responsive to their identity and family history including age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, sex, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation.</p> <p>The care and help assist them to develop a positive self-view and to increase their ability to form and sustain positive relationships and build emotional resilience and a sense of their own identity. They also help them to overcome any previous experiences of neglect and trauma.</p>		
<p>Staff always place the well-being of individual children at the centre of their practice.</p> <p>Children's achievements are celebrated and appropriately rewarded.</p> <p>Their day-to-day needs are met, such as routine, privacy, personal space, nutritious meals and enjoyable mealtimes.</p>		
<p>Children have appropriate contact with their family, friends and other people who are important to them.</p> <p>There are no unnecessary restrictions in place.</p> <p>Staff work proactively and positively with parents and former carers to promote contact and continuity of care where appropriate.</p>		
<p>If there are any breaches of the national minimum standards (NMS), these do not directly impact on the safety or welfare of children.</p>		

How well children are helped and protected

Item	Evaluation	Evidence
<p>Children feel protected and are protected from harm, including neglect, abuse, sexual exploitation, accidents, bullying and radicalisation.</p> <p>There is a strong and proactive response from all those working with children that reduces actual harm or the risk of harm to them, including self-harm.</p> <p>That response includes regular and effective contact and planning with the child’s allocated social worker (if appointed) and their family.</p>		
<p>Children can identify a trusted adult they can talk to about any concerns.</p> <p>They report that adults listen to them, take their concerns seriously and respond appropriately.</p> <p>Children who communicate non-verbally have trusted adults who have the skills to communicate with them and represent their concerns for them.</p>		
<p>Any risks associated with children offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming, going missing, being affiliated with gangs or being sexually exploited are known and understood by the adults who look after them.</p> <p>There are plans and help in place that are reducing harm or the risk of harm and there is evidence that these risks are being minimised.</p>		
<p>Children who go missing experience well-coordinated responses that reduce harm or risk of harm to them.</p> <p>Risks are well understood and minimised.</p>		

<p>There is a clear plan of urgent action in place to protect them and reduce harm or the risk of harm. The school is aware of, and implements in full, the requirements of the statutory guidance for children who are missing.</p> <p>It challenges the local authority if an independent return home interview is not offered or arranged by that local authority. It takes appropriate steps to escalate concerns.</p> <p>Parents are made aware of incidents where the child has been or is missing. Staff look for children when they are missing.</p>		
<p>Plans and risk assessments are timely and address effectively any known vulnerabilities each child may have.</p> <p>Risk assessments are known to the staff team and regularly reviewed and updated. Children are supported to take appropriate risks according to their developmental age and understanding as part of their development of independent living skills.</p>		
<p>Children are protected, and helped to keep themselves safe from bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism, radicalisation and other forms of discrimination.</p> <p>Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged and help and support are given to children about how to treat others with respect.</p>		
<p>Children receive help and support to manage their behaviour and feelings safely. Staff looking after children respond with clear boundaries about what is safe and acceptable and seek to understand the triggers for behaviour.</p>		
<p>Positive behaviour is promoted consistently.</p>		

<p>Staff use effective de-escalation techniques and creative alternative strategies that are specific to the needs of each child and designed in consultation with them where possible.</p>		
<p>Any use of restraint or restrictive practice is only when necessary to protect the child and/or those around them and must be proportionate. All incidents are recorded, reviewed and monitored by staff. The views of the child, dependent on their age and understanding, are sought and understood.</p>		
<p>Conflict management is effective and includes the appropriate use of restorative practices that improve relationships, increase children's sense of personal responsibility and reduce the need for formal police intervention.</p>		
<p>Proactive and effective working relationships with the police help to support and protect children. Staff work with the police to protect the children living in the school from any unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system.</p>		
<p>Staff understand the risks that using the internet may pose for children, such as bullying, grooming, abuse or radicalisation. They have well-developed strategies in place to keep children safe and support them in learning how to keep themselves safe.</p>		
<p>Careful recruitment and regular monitoring of staff, agency staff and volunteers prevent unsuitable people from being recruited and having the opportunity to harm children or to place them at risk. The relevant authorities are informed of any concerns about inappropriate adults.</p>		

<p>Staff, including the designated lead for safeguarding, know and follow procedures for responding to concerns about the safety of a child.</p> <p>Any child protection concerns are immediately shared with the placing and/or host local authority as required and a record of that referral is retained.</p> <p>There is evidence that the designated lead for child protection follows up the outcome of the referral quickly and that appropriate action has been taken to protect the child from further harm.</p> <p>If the school is not satisfied with the response from either its own local authority or the placing authority, it escalates concerns appropriately, including (where relevant) by writing to the director of children’s services (DCS) in the local authority placing the child.</p>		
<p>Investigations into allegations or suspicion of harm are shared with the appropriate agencies and are handled fairly, quickly and in accordance with statutory guidance.</p> <p>Children are supported and protected.</p> <p>Support is given both to the person making the allegation and the person who is the subject of the allegation.</p>		
<p>The school has effective links with local authorities, designated officers and other important safeguarding agencies.</p> <p>There is good communication about safeguarding issues, such as any injuries sustained during restraints or allegations against staff.</p> <p>The school has good relationships with relevant local voluntary sector</p>		

organisations that may be able to offer specialist support to children in keeping themselves safe.		
The physical environment for children is safe and secure and protects them from harm or the risk of harm. Risk assessments for the physical environment are regularly reviewed and updated and comply with statutory requirements.		
If there are any breaches of the NMS, these do not directly impact on the safety or welfare of children.		

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Item	Evaluation	Evidence
The provision is led effectively and efficiently by suitably trained and experienced leaders and managers. Urgent action is taken to address any vacancy of the head of boarding (or equivalent).		
The provision is properly staffed and resourced. Staff, including agency staff, are suitably vetted, qualified and able to deliver high-quality services to children. Arrangements for recruitment and appraisals are robust		
Leaders and managers actively and regularly monitor the quality of care provided. They use learning from practice and feedback to improve the experiences and care of children. They learn from complaints, staff feedback, successes and breakdowns, and any serious events. They identify strengths and areas for improvement and implement development plans that		

<p>continually improve the experiences and care of children.</p>		
<p>Action is taken to address all issues of concern, including concerns or complaints from children, parents and other professionals. Proper investigations are carried out. Placing and host authorities are engaged as necessary. Effective action has been taken to address all recommendations and areas to improve from previous inspections.</p>		
<p>Leaders and managers ensure that plans for individual children comprehensively address their needs. Leaders and staff work proactively with other agencies and professionals. Leaders and managers seek to build effective relationships with parents, with social workers from placing authorities, and with their own local authority to secure positive outcomes for children. The nature and extent of the relationships will vary depending on the legal status of the children, the future plans for the children and the relationships they have with their parents, including the contact arrangements that are in place.</p>		
<p>Leaders and staff work proactively with the local community including neighbours, faith groups, leisure organisations and local businesses to support children to use the facilities and to develop a sense of belonging, security and purpose.</p>		
<p>If children are not settling in, leaders and managers take steps to ensure that the plan is reviewed with the placing authority and/or parents, as appropriate, to</p>		

<p>consider the best steps to take next.</p> <p>They challenge effectively and take action when they are concerned that placing authorities are not making decisions that are in children's best interests, when the statutory requirements for looked-after children are not met or when they cannot keep children safe.</p>		
<p>Leaders and managers understand any plans for the children and drive the achievement of important milestones, goals and permanence for their futures.</p> <p>Leaders and managers monitor the progress that individual children make and can demonstrate the positive impact that living at the school has had on individual children's progress and life chances.</p>		
<p>Managers and staff receive regular and effective supervision focused on children's experiences, needs, plans and feedback.</p> <p>Supervision is recorded effectively.</p>		
<p>Staff and leaders receive effective support and challenge, including through team and management meetings, to ensure that their professional development results in the right environment for good practice to thrive.</p> <p>The emotional impact of the work on staff is recognised and managed well by leaders and managers.</p>		
<p>Training, development and induction activities are effective.</p> <p>They are focused on ensuring that leaders, managers, staff and volunteers can meet the specific needs of children and are up to date with professional, legal and practice developments in their specialist area, and the policies and legal obligations of the school.</p>		

Activities are evaluated to ensure that they lead to effective practice.		
Residential and education staff support each other and work collaboratively to provide consistency and stability. There are clear responsibilities and accountabilities and staff have a sense of shared ownership about its practice. Staff report that they are well led and managed and there is other evidence to support this.		
Leaders and managers make child-centred decisions about children coming to stay at the school. They prioritise the safety and stability of the group environment and take account of the likely impact of new children joining the school.		
The statement of principles and practice is kept under review and clearly sets out the ethos and objectives of the school.		
The head of school ensures that the physical environment is maintained to a high standard, is comfortable and meets the needs of the children. Any damage or wear and tear is quickly and regularly repaired.		
The school is financially viable and can provide high-quality, stable care for children.		
Volunteers, gap-year students or other adults who work with children at the school are trained, supervised and supported to carry out their roles appropriately and to provide a high-quality service that enhances the experiences of children.		
The ethos and objectives of the school are characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children. This is demonstrated in practice. Staff have confidence in managers		

when reporting and addressing safeguarding matters.		
Leaders and managers regularly review and act on any known risks to children, taking advice and guidance from local partners and agencies.		
There are effective relationships with parents or carers so that they feel confident leaving their child at the school and they understand what the service can offer. Parents feel involved in the running of the school and are able to raise concerns and complaints. Staff are accessible and keep parents informed about their child's stay at the school.		
Governors and/or those with responsibility for the school are effective. They have skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, and actively promote the safeguarding and welfare of children. They provide robust scrutiny of boarding arrangements and regularly review and monitor the school's policies, practice and records, including those that address safeguarding.		
If there are any breaches of the NMS, these do not directly impact on the safety or welfare of children		

Outstanding

The experiences and progress of children are likely to be judged outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a good judgement, there is evidence of the following:

The overall experiences and progress of children

Item	Evaluation	Evidence
Professional practice consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained improvement to the lives of children. Professional practice responds positively to children's complex and changing needs. There are examples of excellent practice that are worthy of wider dissemination.		
There is significant evidence of change and improvement for children because of the actions of the staff working at the school. The progress of children is exceptional, taking into account their starting points.		
The experience of staying at the school enhances children's life opportunities. For children with the most complex needs, staff are able to evidence the sustained benefit they have had in making a difference to the lives of children in their care.		
Research-informed practice, some of which may be innovative, continues to develop from a strong and confident base, making an exceptional difference to children's experiences and progress.		
There are no breaches of the NMS.		

How well children are helped and protected

Item	Evaluation	Evidence
Professional practice results in sustained improvement to the lives of children. Highly effective planning manages and minimises risks inside and outside of the school. Where children are new to the school, any		

risks are well understood and are being significantly reduced.		
Proactive and creative safeguarding practice means that all children, including the most vulnerable, have a strong sense of safety and well-being and they are unlikely to be missing from the school on a regular basis. Children are involved in creating ways to de-escalate situations and finding creative alternative strategies that are effective.		
There are no breaches of the NMS.		

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Item	Evaluation	Evidence
Leaders and managers are inspirational, confident and ambitious for children and influential in changing the lives of those in their care.		
Leaders and managers create a culture of aspiration and positivity. They have high expectations of their staff to change and improve the lives of the children they are responsible for.		
Leaders and managers lead by example, innovate and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest quality care for children.		
Leaders and managers know their strengths and weaknesses well and can provide evidence of improvement over a sustained period.		
Leaders and managers develop and maintain professional relationships between the school and partner agencies that ensure the best possible care, experiences and futures for children.		
There are no breaches of the NMS.		