

The Swedish School Society

Swedish School Society Ltd

The Swedish School Society, 82 Lonsdale Road, London SW13 9JS

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

The Swedish School Society is an independent school that provides Swedish education with a considerable proportion of lessons in English. The school is a charitable organisation run by the Swedish School Society Ltd. The school admits boys and girls aged from three to 19 years. At the time of the inspection, the school had 232 pupils on roll.

The sixth form is located in The National Archives in Kew, Richmond. The school has boarding arrangements with host families for post-16 students. These are exchange students who usually spend from one term to a year in the sixth form. At the time of inspection, out of 93 sixth-form students, 55 were living with host families.

The deputy headteacher has joined the school since the last inspection and has the lead responsibility for the sixth form and boarding. He is line managed by the headteacher and supported by the host families coordinator, an administrator and a team of staff in pastoral roles, including a counsellor, a nurse and teachers in mentoring roles. Leaders and managers are qualified and experienced in their roles.

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 March 2024

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

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

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.

Date of last inspection: 17 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Students travel from abroad to continue their studies. They are well supported by the school and host families to have an enjoyable time in London. The school provides a Swedish curriculum that offers students the chance to continue their studies in line with the national approach. Students at this school also benefit from the 'additional classroom of the city of London'. Students appreciate the opportunity and see this as an exciting adventure and a chance to grow and develop their independence.

Students have an excellent learning environment at the school. They enjoy each other's company and make lasting friendships. Previous students come back to visit the school years later. They also keep in touch with their host families. Teachers and hosts are proud of the role they play in this part of children's lives and their development towards adulthood.

Students are supported to develop their independence skills. Staff and hosts treat students like adults but provide boundaries and support so that students have a positive environment for their year abroad.

The school has a commitment to inclusion and developing students' views about equality. As students are mostly from overseas, teachers provide a course to help them understand local culture, which also draws in themes such as equality. Students enjoy trips to museums, stately homes and music concerts, trips on the river and afternoon teas. Students also go to sporting events and sports clubs and are encouraged to explore London together. This broadens children's experiences and world perspective during their year away.

Arrangements for students to come to the school are robust. There is a comprehensive assessment that includes students, their families and host families before they arrive. Children's views are taken into account in this process. Students are offered a comprehensive induction. These arrangements help students to have a positive experience when they arrive, and they settle quickly.

Staff know children very well and they can spot early signs that children may be struggling. Staff are observant to even minor changes in behaviour. They are inquisitive and professionally curious to understand what behaviours mean and how they can help. Staff's oversight of student welfare is comprehensive. Host families and children's own families are also included as needed to support children during their time at the school. As a result, students are offered comprehensive and caring support.

Children receive support and encouragement to proudly celebrate their identity and share this with others. Staff are champions for equality and diversity and challenge

every event of perceived discrimination. There is a consistent and embedded mindset in the children of equality and treating others with kindness and respect.

The school has excellent processes for gathering children's views, including regular meetings and surveys. Children say that they feel listened to and the school responds promptly to any issue or request, including changing the host family. This helps to ensure that the school maintains a child-centred approach.

Most students enjoy positive relationships with their host families. Host families support students to settle into their homes and a new city. They organise trips out and provide home-cooked meals. A very small number of hosting arrangements do not work as hoped. Students are empowered to share their thoughts about their host arrangements with school staff, who promptly look at alternative arrangements. When new arrangements are put in place, these are successful. This means that children can make the most of their time away from home.

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

Host families ensure that the environment children live in is safe. They have gas safety checks and protective fire measures in place. The school's hosting coordinator carries out regular checks at host homes so that staff and leaders can be assured that safety measures are in place.

Staff implement measures to consider the suitability of hosts. These involve obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service checks and references so that leaders have assurances about the people who care for children who attend the school. Arrangements for recruitment of staff are also suitable.

The hosting team receives a lot of information from students when they apply to come to the school. This includes a personal statement, information from their schools and their preferences for host families. The hosting team reviews this information carefully to consider any risk factors for children who apply to come to the school. They are realistic about what is manageable in a host family in an overseas school placement and make decisions accordingly. As a result, there are very few incidents or concerns about students.

The school counsellor is available to students. Staff proactively encourage students to speak with her if there are any concerns. The counsellor is also available to support hosts as needed. Combined with the comprehensive pastoral and academic support, this provides a safety net for children visiting the school from abroad.

Procedures are in place in the event of serious safeguarding incidents but very rarely need to be used. On one occasion, leaders did not follow up on a serious concern, or challenge other agencies. Leaders have learned from this. Clarity about the role of the designated safeguarding lead and their oversight of safeguarding across the school, and the safeguarding responsibilities set out in leaders' job descriptions are

areas to develop. Leaders have accepted the need for more clarity and are already focusing on how this can be achieved.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

This school is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for children. Leaders and staff ensure that there is outstanding support in place to help children meet these expectations and their own aspirations.

Leaders are ambitious for children and they are clear about the benefits for students who study at this school. They put in place structures that support children to achieve academically, as well as maintaining structures to support children to be safe outside of school. Children are at the heart of the school. Staff and leaders take decisions that support children and stretch them to achieve their potential.

Staff feel proud to work at the school. They have a strong commitment to the school, their colleagues and their work. Staff have enormous faith in the strong and supportive school leadership team. Leaders clearly model commitment to the values and ethos of the school.

Host families thoroughly enjoy hosting the children who stay in their homes. There is a clear structure of support, with phone numbers provided for hosts, students and parents to call if needed at any time. This adds a layer of support to the host experience that host families appreciate. All hosts identified the excellent support they receive from the host coordinator, host administrator, teachers and leaders.

Staff and leaders review arrangements for hosting if students raise any concerns. They act swiftly and arrange a new host family. Staff then offer ongoing support to students and hosts so that these arrangements are supported to succeed.

The school statement of boarding principles and practice is a clear, useful outline of the provision of the school. Host families have a useful handbook they can refer to, and the student handbook mirrors this so that everyone has access to the same information.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve? Points for improvement

- School leaders should review the designated safeguarding lead role and safeguarding team structure across the whole school to support oversight and consistency in practice and records.
- School leaders should ensure that their roles in relation to safeguarding are clear in their job descriptions.

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: SC017403

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Jenny Abrahamsson

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors

Karol Keenan, Social Care Inspector

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector

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