



Haberdashers' Monmouth School



Monmouth School, Almshouse Street, Monmouth, NP25 3XP



01600713143

The inspection visit took place on 04/02/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:

Care Type:

Boarding School

Registered places:

150

Main language(s):

English

Promotion of Welsh language and culture:

The provider is not promoting the Welsh language and culture needs of people, and this requires improvement.

Themes:



Well-being



Care & Support



Environment



Leadership & Management

Summary:

Haberdashers School Monmouth is an independent co-educational boarding and day for children aged 3 to 18. Since the last inspection in 2019, the school has undergone major leadership transitions, including a merger. The formerly separate boy's and girl's schools have combined into a single institution. There are 6 boarding houses across the school campus. At the time of inspection, 133 children were boarding.

Children feel safe and have a positive sense of well-being. They experience a nurturing, community minded environment where they feel listened to, and respected. Children speak warmly about boarding staff, who respond swiftly and sensitively to their well-being needs. Pastoral processes are strong which ensures the safety and well-being of children. The environment supports positive well-being and learning. Boarding facilities are well maintained and provide sufficient opportunity for privacy, recreation and study.

The leadership team sets a clear, child centred direction for boarding and demonstrates ambition for continuous improvement. Pupil voice is embedded in quality assurance processes. Staffing levels support the safe supervision of children, including at night, and communication between house teams, nursing and teaching staff promotes consistency of care. Although staff have access to development opportunities and supervision, improved coordination would promote a more consistent standard of provision.

Findings:



Well-being

Children experience positive well-being outcomes, supported by a responsive, respectful and inclusive boarding culture. Children tell us they enjoy boarding life and value the strong sense of community. Children's voices are central to the running of the service. Forums, QR-code feedback and informal consultation routes allow all children to influence a wide range of areas including catering, activity planning, transport to facilities, and daily routines. The school acts on children's feedback. Children recognise these changes and feel valued as contributors to the school and boarding community.

The health centre at the school provides children with convenient access to care and support. Children are registered with local primary health care services. Emotional well-being is strongly promoted through accessible counselling, consistent pastoral relationships, and a trusted nursing team who have positive relationships with children. Children speak positively about the support they receive when homesick, anxious or managing any health challenges. Ensuring all children have sufficient time to make private calls to their family will further enhance their well-being. Staff respond sensitively and collaboratively to children's needs, drawing on multi-agency input where needed. Healthy eating is actively promoted, with a variety of nutritious meals offered and dietary requirements, including vegan and vegetarian options, appropriately catered for. Children have access to cooking facilities within their boarding houses and develop their independence skills within a supportive environment.

Children enjoy a diverse range of activities that contribute to their physical, emotional and social development, including STEM workshops, creative arts, sports, climbing, cadets, cookery and weekend outings. Some children would like more informal trips and greater parity in activities across boarding houses. Children report having sufficient free time and opportunities to pursue personal interests. They receive support to engage in community activities, such as fundraising and gaining employment in the local area. Cultural identity is celebrated across houses; boarding staff promote an inclusive ethos.

There is a whole school approach to safeguarding, and the leadership team respond quickly to identified concerns. Recruitment gaps risk children's safety, but prompt action was taken for the boarding provision during inspection. Relationships with staff are trusting and respectful; boarding staff and nurses are consistently described as approachable adults who notice when children need help and respond quickly. Children consistently report feeling safe, respected and listened to by boarding staff. They felt there are multiple trusted adults they can speak to, including an independent visitor, and an accessible online platform to raise concerns. Clear and consistent expectations are in place for visitors to boarding houses, supporting children's protection and dignity.



Care & Support

Children receive consistent, child centred care. Boarding staff maintain strong and positive relationships with children. Children told us they feel comfortable approaching staff for help and guidance. Children are supervised throughout the day by matrons, whilst academic staff who are house mistresses and masters reside in the boarding accommodation and take responsibility for specific accommodation overnight. Children confirm there is always someone available, including out of hours, and they feel well supported. Older pupils describe greater autonomy and privacy alongside increased responsibility, which they value. Children view boarding positively; one described it as "*Pretty perfect.*"

A structured induction process is in place, designed to address children's needs and ensure they can be effectively met during boarding. Ahead of admission appropriate information is shared with parents and children to support their transition into boarding. A review of the induction handbooks and welcome guides would provide great consistency for children's induction across different boarding houses. Visits, calls, and peer introductions help new children feel comfortable during their transition. There are efforts within each house to promote cultural understanding and celebrations of one another's cultures to ensure inclusivity. '*All about me*' documents written by children ensure boarding staff know children well, they use the personalised plans to guide day to day support. Health and pastoral plans are bespoke to each child, with nursing and teaching staff providing clear guidance to ensure responsive care is provided by support staff. Records show robust processes for risk assessment, parental consent and off-site activities. Children boarding from overseas benefit from education guardians registered with an accredited organisation and regulatory body, ensuring appropriate oversight and support.

Behaviour support guidelines and sanctions are structured, fair, and regularly reviewed to include children's input. The policy outlines clear and appropriate boarding sanctions which are reviewed by leaders in pastoral care to ensure practices are fair and to drive improvements in care practices. Positive actions are encouraged through praise, merit awards, and celebrations within each house. Incidents involving behaviour support should be consistently documented, and staff training in positive behaviour management would further enhance care practices.

Children receive advice and support for their physical health and emotional well-being. GPs visit weekly, and nursing staff are available to children, often forming close relationships with them. Nurses coordinate with local health services and manage medication, sometimes supporting children to self-administer. Children's health records are detailed, regularly reviewed, and audited.



Environment

Boarding houses create a supportive environment that help children settle and thrive. Boarding accommodation is arranged by gender and age. Houses are divided into separate accommodation across the school campus, each overseen by a house parent. Transport is provided to children for ease of access and safe journeys across the school campus. Children have expressed positive views about the boarding facilities, with one remarking, "*It literally feels like home.*"

Accommodation varies by house. Some have been recently modernised, while others are older with more basic décor. Children describe houses as homely, with personal touches and communal spaces that encourage friendship and relaxation. Children have access to a range of games, books and instruments within communal living spaces to promote relaxation and social connections. Room sizes and layouts are appropriate and become more private as children mature. Some younger children share rooms however sixth form children have single en-suite rooms, enhancing their privacy and dignity. Toilets and bathrooms are clean and functional. Shower cubicles offer privacy and facilities are separated by age and gender where required for those in shared rooms, most rooms were not used to their capacity ensuring children have sufficient space. Children have access to private spaces to make personal calls to ensure their right to privacy is maintained. Where children are accommodated in communal bedrooms, they can personalise their spaces to enhance their sense of comfort and belonging. They have sufficient storage within their rooms including access to locked facilities for privacy. Children have access to the school canteen throughout the day and can prepare meals and snacks within the boarding house kitchens. To support study, there are well-equipped communal rooms and each boarder has a desk in their bedroom. Access to school facilities during the day supports study time. Some children feel access to Wi-Fi within boarding facilities could be improved. Children have access to a range of leisure facilities on campus to promote positive well-being including a swimming pool, gyms, sports fields and gardens.

Boarding houses have appropriate security measures. Electronic entry, clear visitor procedures and routine roll calls support safety in houses. A clear process for signing in and out of the home by children is monitored by the boarding staff to ensure everyone is safe. Regular fire safety checks, including evacuation drills, are held. Fire risk assessments highlight necessary measures, which are quickly implemented. Wider health and safety checks are kept up to date, with actions monitored until completion. Maintenance issues are handled promptly, and ongoing refurbishment ensures standards remain high.



Leadership & Management

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) understand the needs of boarding provision and have taken action to enhance governance arrangements following the school's merger. The school's recent self-assessment in accordance with National Minimum Standards for boarding establishes a clear framework for the continued improvement of its boarding provision standards. The management and staffing structure are clearly defined, with delegated responsibilities. SLT demonstrate a clear commitment to prioritising children's welfare over occupancy, and house mistresses and masters report feeling listened regarding admissions. Policies are comprehensive and reflect current legislation. Some policies are due to be reviewed to offer greater clarity, such as the whole school anti bullying policy to reflect boarding specific procedures.

Pupil voice initiatives are strong. Established systems ensure leaders actively incorporate children's views into service development. The complaints process is transparent. Children told us they feel listened to. A culture of openness is evident; Children see how their views shape decisions, and staff describe approachable managers who listen and act. There are robust systems for recording, reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns. Staff follow clear safeguarding procedures with oversight from the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) and Deputy DSPs. Safeguarding and pastoral matters receive regular, structured oversight. Robust online safety protocols are in place to effectively identify and promptly resolve any concerns. Safeguarding training is prioritised, ensuring children's safety and well-being remains a primary focus.

There are established procedures to ensure the safe selection and vetting of boarding staff. However, at the time of inspection there were significant gaps identified in recruitment processes which had the potential to place children's safety and well-being at risk. The school have taken immediate action to rectify this for the boarding provision. More focus is needed to ensure safer recruitment practices are regularly maintained and evaluated for everyone working in boarding, including residential family members. Staff receive ongoing learning and development opportunities; however not all staff have received refresher training in line with the schools' own policies. Ensuring consistent access to training and continuous professional development, including participation in The Boarding Schools Association accredited courses would enhance skills and support consistent practices. Incorporating a system that tracks refresher training intervals would enhance overall oversight and accountability. While supervision and appraisal systems are not yet consistently embedded for all staff, this has been identified within quality assurances processes as a priority with plans to implement structured processes to support reflective practice and professional growth.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

National Minimum Standards

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

Standard	Recommendation(s)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

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