



Westbourne School



GM House (ground floor), 2 Plymouth Road, Penarth, CF64 3DQ



02920705705

The inspection visit took place on 09/12/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Montague Place (W1) Ltd
Care Type:	Boarding School
Registered places:	40
Main language(s):	English
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards a bilingual service.

Themes:



Well-being



Care & Support



Environment



Leadership & Management

Summary:

Westbourne School provides a safe and supportive boarding environment where children report feeling secure and well cared for. Positive relationships between staff and children are a clear strength, and children value the friendly, respectful atmosphere and the benefits of living within an international community. Children told us being part of such a positive international community is the highlight of living at the boarding house. Emotional support and pastoral care are available through a dedicated team of boarding staff, school staff, and an independent listener. Children told us they feel confident raising concerns, and they are listened to and supported. Academic achievement is prioritised by children and staff alike, with access to study spaces and structured support. Wider activities and cultural opportunities contribute to children's personal development.

Children told us they were satisfied with the facilities within the boarding house. The house is secure and health and safety checks are frequently held. However environmental improvements

are needed to address room size disparity, and accessibility in the boarding house.

The leadership team demonstrate a clear vision for integrating boarding into school life. Pupil voice initiatives drive improvements . Staff training is robust, and suitable to the needs of the service. There is ongoing monitoring of key aspects of school and boarding life, though greater record keeping and oversight would support proactive opportunities for development.

Findings:



Well-being

Children told us they feel safe, supported and cared for within the boarding house. They receive support from a team of dedicated boarding staff who attend to their pastoral needs. Recent changes to the structure have seen academic staff also completing shifts within the boarding house, and leading activity sessions in the local and wider community. Children told us they had recently enjoyed a trip to Bath Christmas markets and a hike up Pen y Fan. Children share a sense of community and speak positively about the international community within the home. When asked about the highlights of living in the boarding accommodation, the relationships they have fostered with peers and staff was universally raised as the key benefit.

Children are confident in the processes for raising concerns. They are aware of who the safeguarding leads are and how to access support when needed. Children provided examples of the positive action taken by staff when they have raised concerns in the past. There is a clear process for safeguarding in the school and boarding house, supported by a robust policy and training for staff. The process would be strengthened by more structured recording and monitoring mechanisms ensuring all conversations and actions taken are logged consistently to provide a clear audit trail. This is being explored by the leadership team who are looking at the potential to upgrade to digital systems.

Emotional and pastoral support is available through boarding staff, the independent listener, and school staff, and children speak positively about these relationships. Children told us they feel well supported and cared for by the head of boarding in particular. We observed respectful, friendly and professional interactions between staff and children throughout the inspection. A peer mentoring scheme is planned for implementation after Christmas, and surveys are used to monitor academic stress, which reflects a proactive approach to well-being.

Relationships between children are positive, supportive, and friendly. Children told us they value these connections and benefit from living within an international community that promotes cultural diversity and inclusion. Children feel supported to achieve positive academic outcomes, with access to study resources and staff guidance when required. Children told us they feel a strong drive for academic attainment, and are supported to achieve with dedicated prep time, and mentoring by peers as well as staff at the school's hub, located by a short walk from the accommodation. Activities designed to strengthen academic and life skills such as debate team and building a race car were well regarded by children.



Care & Support

Boarding staff maintain strong and positive relationships with children, which contributes to a supportive environment. Children told us they feel comfortable approaching staff for help and guidance. Opportunities for independence are embedded within daily routines, including access to cooking and laundry facilities, which children value as part of their preparation for adult life.

Children with identified support needs have welfare plans in place. Though these plans note key areas for support, the plans lack specific details or guidance to ensure consistent approaches are taken to support them. The welfare plans contain limited information on risk and how to address these, however key areas of risk are identified. There is limited input or feedback from children on the development and review of their welfare plans. Working collaboratively with children to develop their own support structures would enhance their impact, and support children to develop their own support strategies, as well as goals.

Children receive support to manage their own medication after being assessed as confident and competent to do so. The majority of medication within the boarding house is topical or homely remedies, which are stored safely and securely within bedrooms, or with the boarding parent. Medication records are maintained, and all boarders are registered with a local GP, ensuring health needs are met. Monitoring of health visits and first aid is completed within a report to the proprietor, though it would be beneficial to develop a system to keep medical information for boarders together, to support ease of access in an emergency or if a health need emerged.

There are no dedicated nursing staff for the school or boarding house. Children are cared for by house parents or the head of boarding with any minor ailment, and support is sought from local health practitioners where required. Boarding parents support children to attend medical appointments if required. The school are currently considering the options for a dedicated sick bay, and this is on the agenda for the senior leadership team (SLT) in the new year.

Homestay monitoring records are in place, with evidence of contact and review, and children confirmed that these arrangements are well managed. Children who reside in homestays organised by the school told us they are well supported and cared for and enjoy the quieter aspects of this compared to the boarding house. Although, they are still fully involved in boarding activities and life, such as access to share meals and events.

Children told us although they have seen improvements in the variety and quality of food on offer, the menus sometimes lack variety and do not always reflect the cultural cuisines or preferences of boarders. It could be beneficial for menus to include allergen and nutritional information to support boarders to make healthy choices.

Children's feedback is gathered through a variety of surveys which are considered by the SLT.

Children assured us that changes are often made following feedback, but formal documentation of these actions would strengthen governance and accountability.



Environment

The boarding house is mostly well-maintained, creating a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere for children. Children told us they enjoy living there and described it as “*Cosy*” and “*Respectful*,” with positive relationships among peers. The house has been decorated for Christmas and feels warm and welcoming in the communal space. The stairwell to communal and boys boarding accommodation is decorated with photographs of formal events and activities and includes dates for children’s birthdays. Children told us they celebrate birthdays and special events in the home.

There is some disparity between room sizes within the boarding house. Some bedrooms appear overcrowded, whereas others have ample space and storage. Dormitories and shared rooms vary in size, with some necessity for the use of bunkbeds to accommodate children within the small home. Accessibility in the boarding house is poor, with no provision for wheelchair users, which restricts inclusivity. There is a programme in place to address the use of bunkbeds and to update fixtures and fittings within the house.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are completed for those who require assistance, but do not outline processes for night-time evacuation, or evacuation from the boarding house. The head of boarding is aware of this and is making necessary changes. Health and safety and fire checks are regularly undertaken by the maintenance team, with clear records of drills and tests taking place. However, the fire risk assessment is overdue for review, though we are assured action will be taken to address this.

There are plenty of toilets and showers for children to access, which are separated by gender, with some provision for private bathroom on the ground floor. Bathrooms were clean and maintained by the housekeeping team who the children spoke highly of. However, children consistently raised concerns about bathroom hygiene from other children and water temperatures; while staff assured us these issues are addressed, feedback should be formally recorded to demonstrate that children’s voices are heard and acted upon.

Communal space within the boarding house and outdoor areas are limited, though there are two small garden spaces and a bike shed for those who cycle. Outside seating is available for use in warmer months. Children benefit from dedicated study spaces within their bedrooms, with individual desks and chairs, as well as use of the hub located just a few minutes’ walk away from the boarding house. This additional space for study and socialising increases the communal space on offer to children significantly. As prep time is dedicated Monday through Wednesday each week, a significant period of time is spent here by children, which supports academic focus and preparation.

Security measures, including CCTV and keypad entry, are in place and contribute to a sense of

safety within the home. There is a clear process for signing in and out of the home by children and this is monitored by the boarding staff to ensure everyone is safe. Additionally, this is considered to ensure children are taking plenty of breaks and seeking rest and fresh air. Further consideration could be given to privacy arrangements, such as the use of locks for bedroom doors.

Infection prevention and control measures for managing illness are outlined within policy. Further consideration is being given to this for managing within shared rooms due to the absence of a dedicated sick bay at present.



Leadership & Management

Leadership and management within the boarding provision is strong. There is clear evidence of a shared vision across the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and wider staff team to ensure boarding is fully integrated into school life. Boarding is now a standing item on the SLT agenda, which demonstrates commitment to this vision, and enables oversight and continuous improvement of the boarding provision.

The principal and head of boarding have implemented positive pupil voice initiatives to gather and monitor feedback from children. Children told us they feel their views are listened to and that action is usually taken when they raise concerns or issues. During the inspection, we observed positive and respectful interactions between leaders and children, reinforcing a culture of openness and trust.

Staff recruitment processes are clear, with staff undergoing Enhanced checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service. Recruitment checks are thorough, and well documented. We found staff training is robust, with a focus on safeguarding. The Designated Safeguarding Practitioner (DSP) provides annual refresher training to the staff team, as well as undertaking advanced training to support their own practice and development. Boarding house staff are experienced in the field and bring a strong sense of commitment and passion to the pastoral care of children within their care. There has been a focus on introducing structures and routines to support academic attainment within the home, this was welcomed by some children, though some told us more flexibility would be beneficial to them.

There is a plan in place to ensure all staff receive regular support and supervision with the introduction of a new appraisal system. It is vital boarding staff and ancillary staff receive the same level of supervision to enable them to develop and feel supported within their roles. Though we are assured this is taking place, we expect written records of these to be captured.

The head of boarding and principal both prepare reports for the proprietor to ensure monitoring and oversight of the boarding and school provision. Monitoring of key functions of the boarding provision is taking place consistently. However, there is limited evidence of formal oversight or structured quality assurance processes. It would be beneficial for the leadership team to consider the monitoring and demonstrate any analysis of their findings. Consideration should be given to how patterns and trends from monitoring data could be analysed to forecast future needs and inform proactive measures.

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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