

Ashwicke Hall School

Ashwicke Hall, Marshfield, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 8AG

Inspection dates

3–5 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that is inadequate

- The proprietor and senior leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools are met.
- Leadership of safeguarding is inadequate. Systems for monitoring and checking the safety of pupils in respect of child protection, safer recruitment, and the management of medication and fire safety are weak.
- Leaders have an overgenerous view of the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders do not have robust plans for school improvement. Development plans do not provide the strategic direction required to quickly improve the school.
- The quality of teaching is too variable from lesson to lesson and across different subjects. Teachers lack guidance and direction on how to improve the quality of their teaching.
- The school's agreed approach to the delivery of the curriculum and assessment systems does not support pupils effectively to learn and achieve well, especially the most able.
- Teachers do not insist that pupils take pride in the presentation of their written work or complete it to the best of their ability. Pupils are unclear as to how to improve their work.
- Teachers do not sufficiently encourage the development of pupils' spoken English.
- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. When activities do not inspire or motivate pupils, they become restless which results in some low-level disruption.
- Boarding staff have few opportunities for professional development, supervision and training to ensure that they are sufficiently up to date with the latest legislative guidance.
- Boarders report that they have few opportunities to express their views. Decisions are made without their consultation with regard to their study time in the evening.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy the weekly trips and visits to places of interest which extend their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils enjoy sports and are given opportunities to demonstrate their leadership skills in a range of activities.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and well mannered.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that rigorous systems and procedures are securely in place for safeguarding pupils
 - implementing a robust and structured programme of training and support to equip staff with the knowledge and skills required in all aspects of safeguarding
 - providing high-quality training for teachers to develop their practice
 - training teaching staff in strategies to manage behaviour positively so that pupils do not lose focus or disrupt the learning of others
 - ensuring that all boarding staff are trained appropriately for their role, and that they receive regular supervision and review of their performance
 - ensuring the boarding accommodation is well maintained, homely and promotes boarders' privacy
 - improving opportunities to consult with boarders about their boarding experiences, and responding effectively to their feedback.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve across all subjects
 - provide the most able pupils with learning opportunities that inspire, motivate and challenge them to think more deeply
 - help pupils to use and practise their spoken English
 - provide pupils with precise feedback that enables them to understand fully how they can improve their work
 - insist on the highest standards of presentation and quality in pupils' written work.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
 - The proprietor ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (paragraph 7(a) and 7(b))
 - The proprietor ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school and that such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding. (paragraph 8(a) and 8 (b))
 - The proprietor ensures that the behaviour policy is implemented effectively. (paragraph 9b)
 - The proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy. (paragraph 11)
 - The proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order

2005. (paragraph 12)

- The proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff. (paragraph 14)
- The proprietor ensures effective implementation of the risk assessment policy and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. (paragraph 16(a) and 16(b))
- The proprietor ensures that no member of staff is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act. (paragraph 18(2)(a))
- The proprietor ensures that no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction. (paragraph 18(2)(b))
- Ensures the person's medical fitness. (paragraph 18(2)(c)(ii))
- Ensures that where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment. (paragraph 18(2)(d))
- In the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of boarders, in addition to the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (e), the proprietor checks that Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools is complied with. (paragraph 18(2)(f))
- The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment. (paragraph 18(3))
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question. (paragraph 21(1))
- The register referred to in sub-paragraph (1) may be kept in electronic form, provided that the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form. (paragraph 21(2))
- In relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether (paragraph 21(3)(a))
 - S's identity was checked (paragraph 21(3)(a)(i))
 - a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act (paragraph 21(3)(a)(ii))
 - a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction (paragraph 21(3)(a)(iii))
- checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant

qualifications (paragraph 21(3)(a)(iv))

- an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S21(3)(a)(v)
- checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d) (paragraph 21(3)(a)(vi))
- a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made (paragraph 21(3)(a)(vii))
- checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e) (paragraph 21(3)(a)(viii))
- in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed. (paragraph 21(3)(b))
- Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, fulfil their responsibilities effectively and actively promote the well-being of pupils so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs (34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c))
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. (paragraph 25)
- The school must ensure that arrangements to meet the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

■ The school must meet the following national minimum standards.

- The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. Boarders are informed who this person is, and how to contact them and they are easily accessible. Boarders are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside telephone numbers, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner to contact in case of problems or distress. (NMS 2.3)
- All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the boarders to whom they are prescribed. (NMS 3.4)
- Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for boarders, which are reasonably accessible from the sleeping accommodation. Separate toilet facilities are provided for boys and girls unless each toilet facility is provided in a separate room intended for use by one pupil at a time, the door to which is capable of being secured from inside. Toilet and washing facilities provide appropriate privacy for boarders. (NMS 5.3)
- Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained. (NMS 5.4)
- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. (NMS 7.1)
- In addition, fire drills are regularly (at least once per term) carried out in 'boarding time'. (NMS 7.2)
- The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the

welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (NMS 11.1)

- The school’s governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary. (NMS 13.1)
- The school’s leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. (NMS 13.3)
- The school’s leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met. (NMS 13.4)
- The school’s leadership and management and governance actively promote the wellbeing of pupils. (NMS 13.5)
- Senior boarding staff have an adequate level of experience and/or training. (NMS 13.6)
- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (NMS 13.8)
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate (NMS 13.9)
- Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (NMS 14.1)
- For all persons over 16 (not on the roll of the school) who after April 2002 began to live on the same premises as boarders but are not employed by the school, an enhanced certificate with barred list information must be obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). (NMS 14.2)
- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with pupils, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with pupils. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence. (NMS 14.3)
- Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding. (NMS 15.1)
- Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Boarders are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. (NMS 17.1)

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision	Inadequate
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the boarding provision	Inadequate

- The proprietor and school leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools are met.
- School leaders have not acted to ensure that all of the areas identified as requiring improvement in the previous inspection have been successfully tackled.
- School leaders have an overgenerous view of the school’s effectiveness, including the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The work of the school is not monitored or reviewed to ensure that it is of a sustained high quality. There is no planning for strategic development and improvement.
- Leaders do not sufficiently challenge teachers in their practice or provide them with clear guidance on how to meet the needs of all pupils. There are few opportunities for teaching and boarding staff to benefit from professional development.
- While leaders attest to a culture of high expectations, aspirations and excellence in academic work, this is not consistent with the day-to-day practice in the school.
- There is no consistency in the implementation of systems or regular monitoring of procedures for all aspects of the school’s work and little monitoring of the quality of care and practices in the boarding provision. Systems are not in place to ensure that senior leaders have effective oversight of complaints, child protection concerns and significant incidents.
- Senior boarding staff do not have an adequate level of experience and/or training to manage safeguarding concerns effectively. The Director has not completed safer recruitment training or undertaken child protection training, despite having responsibility for these areas.
- Leaders, managers and boarding staff do not demonstrate a strong understanding of the national minimum standards and of the social care common inspection framework. As a result, they do not consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- Boarding staff have little opportunity for training or development. They are not provided with regular, formal supervision. As a result, their work is not effectively monitored or reviewed and there are few opportunities to reflect on and develop their practice.
- The curriculum is designed, implemented and evaluated in line with the aims and ethos of the school. However, the impact on pupils’ outcomes and their personal, development, behaviour and welfare is variable. The implementation of the curriculum does not consistently take account of pupils’ starting points or allow for teachers to vary their teaching according to the needs of pupils.
- The school supports the formal curriculum well with extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. They experience a range of artistic,

creative and sporting activities to improve their skills.

- The school effectively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, and mutual respect for, and tolerance of, those with different faiths and beliefs. Pupils acknowledge that they get on well together and enjoy their experience during their stay.

Governance

- The proprietor of the school has not ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools.
- The proprietor has not ensured that safeguarding is effective and that all checks are completed prior to new staff starting in post.
- The proprietor does not challenge school leaders to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- There is insufficient balance of challenge and support to leaders, relative to the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The proprietor does not provide sufficient support for school or boarding improvements because of a lack of recognition of the issues facing the school.
- The proprietor does not manage the performance of the headteacher rigorously and does not enable the headteacher to carry out his work effectively.
- The improvements required in the boarding provision highlighted in the last inspection report have not been attended to, which has a negative impact on pupils' experience in the school.
- Senior leaders stated that financial resources are not readily provided to rectify the boarding accommodation weaknesses in a timely manner.
- Leaders and staff do not have good opportunities for professional training to keep up to date with the latest guidance and legislative safeguarding requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. While safeguarding policies are in place and easily accessible on the website, they are not properly applied. The culture of safeguarding is weak.
- Leaders do not have a clear overview of how effectively the 2016 statutory government guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education', is being implemented and adhered to by staff. They do not have systems in place to monitor and evaluate safeguarding rigorously to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Leaders have failed to manage safeguarding concerns and allegations about staff effectively. Weaknesses are evident in the overall management, decision-making and oversight, record-keeping and reporting of child protection matters.
- Safeguarding training for staff is inadequate. It does not provide them with the required knowledge and understanding to undertake their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Consequently, they are not always sure of the actions to take if they spot any signs of risk.

- When concerns are reported to leaders, staff are not confident that rapid action is taken to minimise risk to pupils.
- Risk assessments are not securely in place or monitored by leaders to check they remain fit for purpose.
- The selection and vetting of new staff does not adequately safeguard pupils. Leaders and managers fail to ensure that all required vetting checks are undertaken rigorously.
- Disclosure and barring checks are not undertaken on all adults who live on the school site, but are not employed by the school. No evidence was provided to demonstrate that there is a written agreement between the school and these adults to safeguard pupils.
- The management and oversight of fire safety is weak. Not all fire doors close properly and some fire doors are repeatedly wedged open. A fire evacuation drill has not taken place in the boarding provision at least once a term as required.
- The management and oversight of medication places boarders at risk of harm. Discrepancies are evident in the administration records and the stock levels of some medicines.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Pupils are not making good enough progress because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable. Teachers' expectations are not high enough. As a result, pupils are not sufficiently challenged and not all pupils make consistently good progress across a range of subjects. This is especially so for the most able pupils. Teachers do not provide these pupils with work that will challenge them fully.
- The quality of feedback to pupils is inconsistent. Pupils are often unclear about what they need to do in order to improve their work, which hampers their progress.
- Pupils' work shows inconsistencies in teachers' expectations and between classes and subjects. For example, pupils are challenged in modern foreign languages, where they make strong progress. However, this is not consistent subject by subject and day by day.
- Teaching takes account of the school's agreed approach to the curriculum. However, teachers do not check well enough what pupils already know, can do and understand. Consequently, pupils complete tasks that are either too easy or too difficult.
- Most pupils commit to improving their work in line with the school's points system for achievement. However, when the tasks set do not meet their needs precisely, they lose focus and progress stalls.
- Opportunities for developing pupils' English skills are typically good. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to practise and develop their spoken English.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. This allows them to answer pupils' questions with accuracy and confidence. Where pupils are making good progress, it is because teachers use effective questioning skills to probe and challenge their thinking. For example, in Year 10 mathematics pupils were making progress in their work on vectors. As a result of clear guidance and direction they were able to answer questions, demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of this area of mathematics.

- When pupils have not been successful in assessments they are provided with good support in additional lessons. They make good progress and their results improve.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not take sufficient pride in their work. The quality of handwriting and presentation of work across a range of subjects varies as teachers do not set consistently high expectations of pupils.
- Pupils are generally polite and courteous and are pleased to comply with the expectations set for them. This was exemplified during the inspection when pupils were polite and well mannered when talking with inspectors, keen to discuss their experiences in school. However, this good conduct is not maintained in lessons where pupils' interest is not held.
- School leaders have not done enough to ensure that pupils are protected from harm by ensuring that safeguarding is fully compliant. Nonetheless, pupils report that they feel safe. They understand how to stay healthy and the importance of emotional and mental well-being. They know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using electronic equipment such as mobile phones and the internet.
- Pupils understand the importance of education and attend school regularly. Few are absent or persistently absent. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.
- Pupils are punctual and well prepared for lessons. They bring the correct equipment and are ready to learn.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of the difference between right and wrong. For example, they know that inappropriate language will not be tolerated. Pupils describe how they work well with staff to tackle inappropriate behaviour and are confident that bullying is rare.
- Pupils' involvement in the 'pupil life' programme develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well and ensures they are learning to be reflective about, and responsible for, their actions as good citizens.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons are too variable. Where teaching is typically good, pupils settle and learn effectively. Where teaching does not engage and motivate pupils, lessons are interrupted by poor behaviour, slowing the progress of individuals.
- Some staff who responded to the questionnaire raised some concerns regarding the behaviour of some pupils. They describe how they do not always receive the training and guidance they need to ensure pupils are consistently well behaved in school.
- Pupils are rewarded with points for positive behaviour. However, the opportunities to express why they may behave badly are not explored sufficiently or reasons identified and followed up.

- Pupils enjoy participating in activities and sports, and are pleased to visit places of cultural and historical interest during their time in the United Kingdom to broaden their experiences of life in Britain.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because they are not making consistently good progress from their starting points. There are uneven rates of progress across year groups and subjects.
- The most able pupils are not making enough progress. Teachers do not provide them with activities that will extend their knowledge and understanding. Too often the most able pupils are providing support for their peers and not extending their own learning and development. Consequently, these pupils are not making the best possible progress.
- Pupils typically spend one term in the school to improve their written and spoken English and to experience life in Britain. However, the quality of pupils' spoken English is too variable. This is because pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunity to practise and develop their spoken English during their learning. Consequently, some pupils lack the confidence to speak English to further improve their speaking skills.
- Information on pupils' achievement demonstrates that they attain well in the context of the school's chosen curriculum. This is especially so in mathematics, written English and science. However, the curriculum does not support teachers in identifying and supporting next steps in learning, preventing pupils from moving on rapidly and making good progress.
- In addition, leaders, subject leaders and teachers do not track or monitor well enough how much progress individuals or groups of pupils are making. Consequently, they do not know the rates of progress pupils are making across a range of subjects or where they could do better. This masks underachievement, especially of the most able pupils.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision

Inadequate

- The overall experiences and progress of boarders is inadequate because there are serious failures to protect them and safeguard their welfare. The management of safeguarding concerns, the vetting of staff and management of medication are not dealt with rigorously or in line with statutory requirements.
- Boarders are not supported by staff who demonstrate a good understanding of the national minimum standards or by staff who are provided with good-quality training and supervision. As a result, not all minimum standards are met and this limits the boarders' experiences.
- Progress in ensuring that boarders' privacy is promoted is too slow. A lack of privacy in boarders' bathrooms was raised at the previous inspection, and had not been dealt with by the time of this inspection. Boarders raised this concern consistently with inspectors.
- Work to secure boarders' views is weak. Boarding staff do not provide formal and effective opportunities to consult with boarders about their boarding experiences. Records are not maintained to demonstrate how staff act on boarders' feedback and their complaints. In addition, the post of independent listener is vacant.

- The boarding accommodation does not provide a homely and welcoming environment throughout. Communal areas in particular are bland. Some windows in one boarding house are not well maintained.
- There are positive and respectful relationships between boarders and boarding staff. Boarders are generally polite and courteous and are learning to treat each other with respect. Boarders value each other's cultural and religious backgrounds.
- There is little bullying and boarders report that if it does happen, staff deal with it effectively. Boarders said that they feel safe in their boarding house. Boarders are aware of how to keep safe when using the internet and keep themselves fit and healthy.
- Boarders thoroughly enjoy a varied programme of weekend activities and visits to tourist attractions. These opportunities enrich their personal growth and development.
- Boarders are helped to maintain regular contact with their families.

School details

Unique reference number	137950
Social care unique reference number	SC472610
DfE registration number	803/6008
Inspection number	10026042

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Independent school
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	115
Proprietor	Salah Ayche
Director	John Nicholson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,000
Annual fees (boarders)	£24,900 to £26,700
Telephone number	01225 891841
Website	https://ashwickehallschool.sabis.net/
Email address	info@ashwicke.sabis.net
Date of previous inspection	19–20 February 2013

Information about this school

- Ashwicke Hall School (Sabis International School – UK) was registered in February 2012 as a co-educational boarding school for 247 pupils aged 11 to 18. The school is part of the SABIS school network located across the world.
- The school is based at Ashwicke Hall, a period building situated in extensive grounds in a rural location near to the city of Bath, in the South-West of England.

- All pupils speak English and most speak other languages in addition to English.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- There are no pupils who come into the category of being regarded as disadvantaged through being known to be eligible for free school meals or being looked after.
- The school does not receive any sports funding.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Students take both IGCSE and Advance Placement External Exams at the school, which is a certified examination centre for both Cambridge IGCSE Exams (UK) and the College Board Advance Placement Exams (USA).

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in different subjects. Meetings were held with the director, senior leaders and staff and parents. A telephone conversation was held with the proprietor.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school documents to check compliance with the independent school standards. These included the school's website, policies, information about pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own work and records relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors talked with a group of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors took account of the 34 responses from staff questionnaire responses. There were too few responses to the online survey, Parent View, for these to be taken into consideration.

Inspection team

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Sharron Escott	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
David Kidner	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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