

# Farlington School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Address</b>	Farlington School Guildford Road Broadbridge Heath HORSHAM West Sussex RH12 3PN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01403 254967
<b>Email</b>	office@farlingtonschool.net
<b>Registered person</b>	Farlington School Trust Ltd
<b>Head of care</b>	Jonnie Goyer
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Jonnie Goyer
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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

Farlington School is a girls' day and boarding school with nearly five hundred students. It provides boarding facilities for up to forty students, there being thirty seven students boarding at the time of the inspection. The school strives to enable the girls to reach their highest standards, and prepare them for life. The boarding facilities are based in the main house. The bedrooms are set within two corridors and five rooms. The older girls in Year 11 and the lower sixth share study bedrooms with one other girl. All upper sixth girls have single study bedrooms. The school is set in extensive grounds with several sports grounds, a large separate sports hall, an outside swimming pool and a farm. The students who board are able to access these facilities outside of the school day and at weekends. The school provides a full activities programme at the weekends in order to offer the students a varied and extensive choice. The school provides a holistic approach to the pastoral care of the boarders which offers the students a family environment.

### **Summary**

This inspection took place over the course of three on site inspection days, preceded by a pre planning at the school. The inspection team comprised 2 inspectors from Ofsted. This inspection focused on specific standards aimed at assessing the welfare of the students who are boarding at the school. Information on which to assess the school's performance was gathered in a variety of ways. These included the examination of documentary information that was supplied by the school, discussions with students in small groups, student guided tours of the boarding houses and recreational areas, a student survey undertaken by the inspectors as well as discussions with the headmistress and a wide range of school staff. The senior management team at the school have a wealth of knowledge and experience to support the staff and students at the school. The school is effective at ensuring that the students who board receive the appropriate support from staff to help them achieve progress, both academic and personal. The staff team are good with updating all of the relevant information needed to make students' time at the school a success. The staff team work effectively at gaining the trust of the students and advocate for them in a positive manner. There is one key area that requires improvement. There are concerns expressed by the inspectors regarding some procedures not yet in place in the medical centre. These issues were raised by both of the inspectors during the course of this inspection and recommendations made to improve the service. Overall the school is warm and very welcoming and the students were very supportive of the school and its ethos. The inspectors have confidence that the school will continue to provide the students with high standards of pastoral care and education.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

It was felt that the school had taken positive action to rectify all of the recommendations that were made at the last Commission Social Care Inspection. Improvements had taken place with regard to recruitment and risk assessment as outlined at the last inspection. In addition Child Protection and Staff Training have been improved. The recording of medication has improved although this is an area that requires further development. Anti Bullying Policies are also given high priority at this school and consultation with the young people has improved. There is a

clear understanding of the principles of social care and good policies and procedures are in place.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Whilst the primary health needs of boarders are being satisfactorily maintained, improvements to a number of areas would further enhance the overall provision of the school. New boarders receive a full medical upon their arrival and all subsequent immunisations are provided. An updated parental consent form/medical questionnaire is available and is provided to parents at the beginning of the school year. Parents and students are asked to return an update form to keep the school informed of any illnesses or treatment received during the school holidays. Health plans are in place for all students but need to be followed up to ensure information is up to date. The local GP practice holds regular surgeries within the school's medical centre and boarders can choose to be seen privately. A separate medical centre is situated within the school grounds and this is staffed by two qualified nurses. Between them, they provide cover from Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm. Equipment, medication and confidential records are all securely stored. Whilst written protocols are in place for various health-related topics, it would be of great benefit if all of these documents were brought together under an all encompassing 'health promotion' policy and procedure. Whilst there are appropriate medication records there was a lack of stock control and there was no returns book. Older boarders are able to keep and self administer medication. They are provided with appropriate lockable facilities and students are assessed by the school nurses as competent to self medicate. However, it is advisable that a risk assessment be completed before a boarder is given this responsibility. The school provides personal, social and health education through the educational curriculum. This is supplemented by the support and advice given by house staff, tutors, and through the medical centre staff. The school nurses also arrange for outside speakers, who may be an expert in a particular field such as drugs or alcohol to offer additional sessions to the students. It is evident that the boarding team know their students very well. They are acutely aware of any significant 'welfare' issues and work hard to provide appropriate and meaningful support. Individual specific welfare plans are in place and information is shared on a need to know basis. All three main meals are provided by the contracted catering team and supplied within the school's main dining hall. The catering manager presents as suitably qualified and experienced, as is the team he manages. Many of the boarders reported dissatisfaction with the lunch-time provision. This is not attributed to the quality of the food on offer. Rather, the long queues and limited time they had to eat their lunch given the small size of the dining room. The school recognises this as an ongoing problem and overall manages the situation well by ensuring lunch is available in appropriate quantities to those eating last and at the end of the queue. The situation should be eased when current building works are completed and junior girls will have their own dining room. There is drinking water available throughout the school and boarding house. In addition students have access to a small kitchenette where they can prepare snacks to supplement the main meals.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Boarders are well protected from bullying. The implementation of sound and robust policies and procedures, for example the policy on antibullying, ensures the few issues are quickly spotted and appropriately dealt with. Pupils and staff were almost unanimous that there was

very little bullying in the boarding house. The small numbers of students mean that any issues that arise are quickly and efficiently dealt with. The culture within the school is that of a large extended family enshrined in the holistic values that underpin the ethos of the school. The policies and procedures relating to child protection are in line with the National Minimum Standards. The lead Child Protection Officer for the school has a copy of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006' and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Board. All staff, including gap students, at the school undertake Child Protection training as part of their induction which is regularly updated. All staff sign to confirm that they have received such training on their induction record. All staff interviewed during the course of this inspection were conversant with the school's own child protection procedures. Any staff who join the school throughout the year have Child Protection training as part of their individual programme of induction. The Deputy Headmistress is responsible to the Headmistress for discipline throughout the school. It is her delegated responsibility to monitor discipline throughout the school. However staff are encouraged to manage situations themselves before referral to more senior staff. The expectations for the students are evident and students commented that they mutually supported one another and that there were few disciplinary issues throughout the school. Overall the staff within the school are consistent and fair in managing the students behaviour. By monitoring records the deputy head is able to spot trends or patterns and any causes for concern. The use of disciplinary measures is made clear within handbooks for staff, pupils and their parents. The school works hard to ensure that parents work in partnership with them. School prefects, including those on the boarding counsel, are not permitted to use any form of sanctions whatsoever. Prefects act as 'role models' and 'ambassadors' for younger pupils within the house and school. Those students spoken to were extremely positive about this aspect of boarding and the overall contribution it made to the school. Boarders confirmed that any issues or concerns they have are for the most part dealt with at an informal stage by the Housemistress or other boarding staff. This is reinforced by the open door policy of the headmistress and senior management team. A clear formal complaints procedure is available to boarders and their parents if they are unable to resolve matters informally. The policy is clear about the initial receipt of a complaint from a parent or third party, in terms of who will investigate and then subsequently if it fails to be resolved. Parents and pupils are also made aware of how to contact external agencies if they remain dissatisfied. Sufficient policies and procedures are in place to protect boarders' privacy. These are being implemented in practice. The standard of shower facilities within the boarding house is reasonable although several parents commented that the senior girls needed more shower facilities. There is rigorous selection and vetting of staff who work with the young people. All staff records inspected had checks through the Criminal Records Bureau, references, identity checks and interview notes. The gap students that the school used had completed all the necessary checks prior to them coming to the school and had 'certificates of good conduct' on their files. The school has an integrated fire detection system, although this is not linked to the local fire station. As soon as possible at the start of each term a fire drill is carried out. Boarders are also subject to a night-time fire drill. Records showed that the last fire drill was held on 17th September 2007. The boarders demonstrate a good awareness of the fire drill, and confirmed that the fire alarms are tested regularly. Boarders are shown what to do in the event of the fire alarm being activated and are aware of the escape route from the house. Pupils are educated to use the appropriate exits in the boarding house and proper fire alarm test, drill and alarm activation records are kept. Risk assessments are drawn up before every excursion or activity. For regular school activities, parental permission is sought once to cover all such regular occurrences. Where an activity involves an overnight stay, then parental permission is sought. The housemistress takes the lead on co-ordinating

all of the risk assessments, planning and preparing guidance for fellow colleagues. All boarding accommodation within the school is private and not accessible by any member of the public. The school does not lease out any of its facilities save for school holidays when the students are not in residence. Closed circuit television (CCTV) is used as a security measure and in addition the school employs a security company that makes roving visits during the night hours to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the students. The school does not appoint educational guardians, and does not recommend agencies to parents. Therefore this standard is not applicable.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff reflect the school's ethos which is to treat the students as individuals. This is supported by the school's general practitioner and the counsellor. Students easily identify a range of staff that they can approach, not solely designated staff and tutors. Posters and leaflets advise students of other services and agencies that they can access should they feel they cannot talk to staff. However students actively talk to staff and email or text the counsellor. The school counsellor is identified as the independent person, to whom the students have free access by email, telephone, text and in person. In addition the local rector who also acts as the voluntary school chaplain acts as a 'listening person'. The school is justifiably proud of its pastoral programme, overseen by the housemistress and a delegated member of the senior management team. There was evidence of formal and informal liaison between all of the staff who have responsibility for caring for the students in the boarding house. Where appropriate pastoral care plans are drawn up for any boarder who is in need of additional support in any area. The school has a clearly stated policy regarding the promotion of equal opportunities. The school values its holistic approach to the students and this is evident in the caring way the girls and the staff regard each other. Both staff and boarders from different ethnic groups are made welcome, and their customs and traditions respected. A range of nationalities are represented in the prefect body and in positions of responsibility within the school boarding house. Positive action is taken to ensure that any students who may feel isolated receive appropriate support. A wide range of activities are available to students, outside of teaching time, which is in addition to the excellent provision of outdoor activities as part of the curriculum. Students are encouraged to take part in leisure activities, as well as creative, musical and theatrical activities. Students speak highly of the facilities available which includes a well stocked library, music rooms and a sports centre, and access is available outside of teaching time to a range of communal and classroom spaces throughout the school.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Students are able to contribute their views, and are happy to approach staff to discuss concerns. Formal consultation routes are available through the school council and Food council. Some students commented in the pupil questionnaire that they do not feel that their views are heard or acted upon. However in open discussions with students most were of the opinion that they were listened to. Discussions with the Headmistress, the deputy head and the housemistress identified that a student voice was important to the school. However although communication is open it is possible that it is the perception of some of the students that they are not listened to. Boarders have access to a private payphones in the boarding house. While most have their own mobile phones, they can access the housemistress's telephone in an emergency. They also

have their own e-mail account set up when they join the boarding community. None of the boarders expressed concerns regarding contacting their parents.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The boarding house is kept neat and orderly, and students speak positively about the facilities. Each student has a secure place to keep personal valuables safe. Students spoken to stated that for the most part individual personal belongings were mutually respected by all of the students. There had been no incidents of damage to or theft of personal property of students. There is a 'school bank' where students can deposit and draw money out when needed. The school encourages students not to keep large sums of money in the boarding house but deposit it in the school bank. Sleeping accommodation for students at the school is suitably furnished and decorated. Farlington School is for girls only so there are no gender issues. Accommodation is situated away from adults save for the boarding staff who look after and care for the students. The accommodation for the students is reasonably spacious and meets the National Minimum Standards. All students who board at Farlington School have suitable facilities for changing by day. The school has excellent sporting facilities and a well-equipped gym. There are suitable changing facilities for the students to use when changing for games and other sports. All students who board at Farlington School can make use of the school shop to purchase personal items or stationery. In addition students can access local shops and Horsham.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Farlington School is a boarding school for girls. It is mainly a day school with just thirty seven students in the boarding house. It offers girls an opportunity to grow and develop, encouraging an awareness and responsibility for each other. The School has a strong Christian ethos but does welcome students with alternative religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The school gives the opportunity for girls of whatever faith to develop their own spirituality and prepare them for life when they leave the school. The school has a suitable statement of boarding principles and practice that is available to parents, boarders and staff. This is contained in the School Prospectus and the Parents' Handbook. The Parents' and Staff Handbooks are updated on an annual basis. Both of these documents cover the aims, admission criteria, and facilities on offer at the school and welfare support services to support students. The principles and practice of Farlington is also contained in other documents such as pupils guide. These documents relate well to policies and procedures and accurately reflect practice within the school. They are professionally produced and through observation, discussion and interview the Inspectors were satisfied that this Standard is exceeded. The school achieves its intentions as set out in these documents and has a solid foundation on which practice takes place. The senior management team within the school were all interviewed by the inspectors during the course of this inspection. All presented as being clear about their roles and responsibilities within the school. They are all very experienced in their own right and are passionate about working with young people. The senior housemistress is responsible for pastoral care within the boarding house while the deputy headmistress has overall responsibility for discipline. House staff spoken to had a clear understanding of the responsibilities of the management team. In addition staff spoken to knew who was responsible for Child Protection matters within the school. The school has not had to face any major crises for a considerable time. There are well formulated policies and procedures in place regarding pupil welfare, accidents and fire, to



name but a few. In conversations that were held with boarders, it is evident that there is a good understanding of what to do in the event of fire and who to contact in case of any other kind of emergency. The general provision of boarding accommodation at the school is good. There are no major discrepancies in the quality of accommodation and most of the accommodation is well decorated. Reference is made to the boarding house accommodation in the Economic Wellbeing section of this report. Sleeping areas, recreational areas and washing facilities are reasonably and appropriately separated for students. The focal point for monitoring of behaviour and any welfare concerns in respect of boarding pupils remains with the housemistress. The school has a very proactive approach to Health and Safety. Risk assessments were very clear to understand and follow. All matters relating to Health and Safety save for minor amendments were found to be satisfactory. Records were found to be very easy to read and policies and procedures were live working documents. Responsibility for monitoring twice a term, the records of risk assessments, major punishments, complaints or accidents are divided between the senior management team depending on the area that is being monitored. As an example, the lead Child Protection Officer maintains a constant awareness of child protection matters at the school while the bursar (on behalf of the health and safety committee) monitors risk assessments. There is a duty rota in relation to the supervision of boarders outside of teaching time. This duty is shared between the Housemistress, Assistant Housemistress, house tutors and other resident staff. At all times there is an adult available for boarders to contact. The prefects continue to be seen as beneficial in enhancing supervision of the boarders. Again, in conversation, the boarders themselves were clear about how to find a member of staff outside of school hours. The Inspectors are of the view that the level of supervision continues to be good. There are clear guidelines about who can leave the school premises and when. When boarders are returning home for holidays or returning to the school at the end of holidays, they are expected to have provided clear travel arrangements. Staff have access to various courses, in boarding practice, run by the Boarding School Association. These courses, along with other internally and externally run courses have been made more accessible to boarding house staff as well as other staff where relevant at the school.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that risk assessments are completed for those students who knowingly self administer medication (NMS 15)
- ensure that a full audit of medication is undertaken by a qualified pharmacist or prescribing advisor in addition to a review of all policies and procedures appertaining to medication. (NMS 15)

## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for boarding school

#### Being healthy

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders' health is promoted (NMS 6)
- safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records (NMS 7)
- boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary (NMS 15)
- boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill (NMS 16)
- boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal problems (NMS 17)
- boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals (NMS 25)
- boarders are suitably accommodated when ill (NMS 48)
- boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered (NMS 49).

**Ofsted considers 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders are protected from bullying (NMS 2)
- boarders are protected from abuse (NMS 3)
- use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate (NMS 4)
- boarders' complaints are responded to appropriately (NMS 5)
- the operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school (NMS 22)
- boarders are protected from the risk of fire (NMS 26)
- the welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school (NMS 28)
- boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities (NMS 29)
- boarders' personal privacy is respected (NMS 37)
- there is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders (NMS 38)
- boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures; all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises are supervised (NMS 39)
- boarders have their own accommodation, which is secure from public intrusion (NMS 41)
- boarders are protected from safety hazards (NMS 47)

**Ofsted considers 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders have access to a range and choice of activities (NMS 11)
- boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination (NMS 18)
- boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands (NMS 27)
- boarders have satisfactory provision to study (NMS 43)
- boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas (NMS 46)

**Ofsted considers 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.**

**Annex A**

## **Making a positive contribution**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school (NMS 12)
- boarders receive personal support from staff (NMS 14)
- boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families (NMS 19)
- new boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in (NMS 21)
- boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school (NMS 30)
- there are sound relationships between staff and boarders (NMS 36)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **Achieving economic well-being**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders' possessions and money are protected (NMS 20)
- boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation (NMS 40)
- boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation (NMS 42)
- boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities (NMS 44)
- boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day (NMS 45)
- boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school (NMS 50)

**Ofsted considers 51 the key standard to be inspected.**

## **Organisation**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- a suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- there is clear leadership of boarding in the school (NMS 8)
- crises affecting boarders' welfare are managed effectively (NMS 9)
- the school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare (NMS 10)
- risk assessment and school record-keeping contribute to boarders' welfare (NMS 23)
- boarders are supervised adequately by staff (NMS 31)
- staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site (NMS 32)
- boarders are adequately supervised at night (NMS 33)
- boarders are looked after by staff which have specific boarding duties, and have received adequate induction and continued training (NMS 34)
- boarders are looked after by staff which follow clear boarding policies and practice (NMS 35)
- the welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 51)
- the welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

**Ofsted considers 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.**