

# Ackworth Boarding School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC041297
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 March 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Robert Curr / Russell Shackford
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Ackworth School
<b>Head / Principal</b>	
<b>Nominated person</b>	Lorna Anthony
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	7 November 2006

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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**

This school is a boarding and day school for pupils aged 11 to 18. The school was founded in 1779 and operates within the spirit and ethos of the Quaker tradition. It is in a village, close to Pontefract and Wakefield.

Pupils are able to board on a full-time (excluding holidays) or a weekly basis. They are accommodated in single sex houses. The school offers full time, weekly and flexi-boarding.

### **Summary**

This announced inspection, which looked at the key standards in all the Every Child Matters outcome areas, found that the school provides a good level of pastoral and social care for boarders. The quality of the premises and the available activities for boarders is of a good standard. The quality of care is well supported by a comprehensive range of clearly written policies and procedures. Boarders enjoy a warm, supportive living arrangement supported by a caring dedicated staff group.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

At the last inspection the head of the boarding community was asked to take action in relation to aspects of staying safe and organisation. These included fire safety, complaints and staff training.

Up-to-date fire risk assessments are in place for each boarding house and other areas used by the boarders. All corridors are regularly checked to prevent fire exits being cluttered. This upholds the safety of people in the event of a fire.

A central written record is maintained with regard to serious complaints. Records of complaints include the outcome.

Although progress has been made in relation to staff training, it is unclear who has had training.

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

The provision is good.

The school takes effective steps to ensure that the health of young people is promoted. There is a fully equipped health centre staffed by a qualified nurse. The school doctor conducts surgeries. There is adequate provision for the overnight care of ailing boarders and adequate toilet and bathroom facilities for infectious patients. Parents complete a health history for each child and sign their agreement for the school to provide medical care and medication. All boarding housemasters and housemistresses are trained in first aid. There are well stocked first aid boxes in each boarding house and in all key areas of the school and sporting areas. Specialist first aid equipment is always in place in the more remote sporting areas of the school.

Boarding house staff correctly store, administer and record the giving of prescribed and household medication. Older boarders may self-administer following a risk assessment.

The school has its own laundry service and older boarders have facilities available to do their own laundry should they choose to do so.

The school has an in-house catering service. The four week menu plan indicates that a varied and nutritious diet is provided. The school menu provides choice and the opportunity for young people to experience international cuisine. Special diets are individually catered for. Children commented that the standard of food provided was good and food sampled was of a high standard. Facilities are in place in each boarding house for the provision of cooking meals and snacks. Drinking water is readily available in the sleeping areas of the boarding houses.

A personal, health and social education programme includes advice and information on general and sexual health and staying safe for all pupils.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders' welfare is protected and safeguarded through comprehensive security measures. The school has a clear policy process on restricting public access that is reviewed regularly. Boarding accommodation is reserved solely for the use of those boarders designated to it. All boarding areas are suitably protected by the use of window restrictors, door key pads and locks. All boarders expressed a view that they feel safe and secure in their accommodation.

The school employs maintenance staff to ensure that all parts of the building are safe and in good order. Risk assessments are in place for high risk activities.

Health and safety matters generally are well managed within the boarding provision. All gas and electrical installations and fire and electrical equipment are regularly checked. There is a range of risk assessments for potential hazards in the environment and for activities undertaken by boarders. However, fire training records are hard to retrieve. It is not clear which boarding staff have had fire drill training.

The school has a written child protection policy and there is online access to the Local Safeguarding Children Board's policy and procedure. All staff receive training in the area of child protection and this is appropriately updated. There is a designated child protection officer in both the senior and junior school to whom all staff will refer any disclosure of child abuse.

The school has a written policy on dealing with bullying which involves a 'zero tolerance' application. No concerns about bullying were evident from conversations with boarders or from their questionnaire survey returns. Shower, bathing and changing facilities in the boarding houses have suitable arrangements which ensure that people have privacy when showering and changing.

There is a clearly written complaints policy which details the school's procedure. A record is kept of complaints received and the actions taken by the school. These are appropriate. The guidance documentation given to boarders and parents on making a complaint does not advise them of their right to make representation directly to Ofsted.

The school has clear policies and practice on behaviour and discipline. Senior students support staff in the care of younger pupils but do not have the power to administer discipline or sanctions. Very few punishments are given. Boarders are aware of the punishment system and

feel it is both fair and appropriate. Boarders benefit from the positive relationships that are fostered throughout the boarding provision.

The school maintains a comprehensive file on each appointed individual member of boarding staff. Criminal Record Bureau disclosures at the enhanced level are undertaken for all personnel at the school, who may have unsupervised contact with the boarders.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders have access to a wide range of activities, sport and leisure pursuits during evenings and weekends. There is a fully equipped gymnasium, swimming pool and tennis courts. Younger pupils can only use the gymnasium under supervision. Older pupils have to undergo tests of competence in using the equipment and must not work out in the room alone. All staff supervising sporting activities are trained in first aid and trained lifeguards oversee the pool.

Although the school has a strong ethos in sporting achievement, boarders do not feel pressurised into achieving above their capabilities and can enjoy competitive or individual sporting activity on their own terms.

The boarding houses all contain a wide range of educational and leisure facilities such as wide screen televisions and digital versatile disc (DVD) players, books, games, puzzles and pool tables. Music and drama are high profile areas within the school in which boarders actively participate.

Each boarder's bedroom has study facilities. Boarders can access the internet through suitably safeguarded sites. Each boarder may have an email address and can contact home via this facility. Each boarding house has phone booths which boarders can use and which are situated in a manner that provides privacy. There are information posters which give the contact details of support agencies.

School information documents advise boarders where they can access personal support. All boarders spoken to felt that they would be able to discuss areas of personal concern with the school nurse in complete confidence.

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

The provision is good.

There is a boarders' council. Views from the boarders are processed through representatives. Some boarders are not clear about the role and function of this process. However, minutes of the meetings are available and it is clear that action has been taken following these meetings. This was seen to be an active forum within the school.

All boarders spoken to have a good relationship with boarding house staff and would readily go to them if they had concerns or needed help and advice. Most boarders have mobile phones on which they can communicate with their parents.

The school's general information documentation provides young people with information about the boarding provision.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Boarders have a lockable facility within their rooms, or they have lockers where they may keep personal possessions. They may also leave monies or valuables with the house staff who keep this under secure conditions. Young people were seen organising spending money with house staff.

Sleeping accommodation in each of the boarding houses is provided in a variety of bedrooms; for example, single and shared bedrooms with or without en suite facilities. There are numerous lounges, rest and study areas and kitchens and kitchenettes in the boarding houses. All are of an adequate standard of furnishing and décor. There are a sufficient number of showers, bathrooms and toilets in each boarding houses. The standard of accommodation within each of the boarding houses is not consistent. This was fed back to the management team. There is a rolling refurbishment programme which is specified in the school's development plan. The boarding houses are well maintained overall.

The external areas around the boarding houses are all pleasantly maintained.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity in the school is good. This is evidenced by the freedom of access by both genders to the sporting, leisure and recreational facilities within the school and the social engagement of boys and girls in all aspects of school life. While the school fully embraces its commitment to being a Quaker school, the religious observance includes a multi-faith approach based on various religious and moral teachings; boarders spoken to felt that this is a strength of the school. The school offers multi-cultural cuisine and welcomes boarders from numerous countries and religious faiths. The school has clearly written policies on disability, gender equality and racial equality.

Parents, pupils and boarders have access to an array of general informative documentation which identifies key service leaders within the school and which clearly outlines the school's principles, policies and procedures. The contact details for Ofsted are not contained within this documentation.

Boarders are supervised by a dedicated staff group both within and outside of the school site. A number of training events for boarding staff have already taken place. However, training records are hard to retrieve. It is not clear who has had training in the various subjects. Each member of the boarding staff has a job description that outlines their duties, role and responsibility and they are subject to a personal development appraisal. There is a clear induction process in place for each member of staff.

The school's policies and procedures are comprehensive and clearly written and these are frequently monitored and updated. There are risk assessments in place for all potentially hazardous activities undertaken in 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):

- record the full names of boarding staff that have taken part in a fire drill practice (NMS 26)
- ensure that boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation by maintaining the rolling programme of repairs and renewals (NMS 40)
- include details of how children and families can contact Ofsted within all appropriate documents, in particular the complaints procedure (NMS 5)
- maintain a clear written record of all training undertaken by boarding staff. (NMS 34)