

# Lime House School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Anne Bannister
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	28 February 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**

Lime House School was founded in 1899 and moved to its present site in 1946. It is a proprietorial school, its owners being the headmaster, his wife and the bursar. It is a co-educational independent boarding and day school for pupils aged four to 18. The school accepts boarders from aged eight upwards. It is situated about two miles from Dalston, a village on the outskirts of Carlisle and accepts day pupils from a wide area of Cumbria. At the time of the inspection there were 108 boarding pupils, a significant number of these being overseas students.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this key inspection was to assess all 29 key standards of the Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards, thus assessing all six sections contained in this report. At the time of inspection there were 108 young people boarding at the school, housed in the school's dormitories. The inspector met with groups of boarders from each form year and spoke to many individually. The school is judged as providing a satisfactory level of care to meet young people's health needs. Four recommendations have been made to assist the school in more adequately addressing the health needs of young people. Young people are well cared for, kept safe from abuse and live in a safe environment. However, deficits in recruitment practice and the need for the school to update child protection policies, lead to an overall judgement of satisfactory being given. Their educational and recreational needs are well met and they are very well supported by pastoral staff. The school provides suitable accommodation and boarding facilities for boarders, and has a range of recreational facilities available for boarders' use. The management of boarding provision is judged to be satisfactory.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

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

The last key inspection occurred in November 2002 and resulted in 19 recommendations being made to the school. A monitoring visit took place in January 2006 to assess how the school was progressing the recommendations made. It was determined at this visit that all but five of the recommendations had been actioned by the school. Of these, five remain outstanding and will continue to be recommended following this key inspection. A pharmacy inspector visited the school in April 2006. Five recommendations were made as a result of this visit and all been addressed.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The health and wellbeing of young people is suitably addressed. Appointments for boarders with doctors and other medical health specialists are organised when required. All boarders are registered with a local dentist. The school ensures boarders with specific health needs are well supported. Health awareness is well addressed through the school curriculum. Staff have a good awareness of the school's health education policies and implement these in their daily contact with boarders. Information is available in age appropriate formats and staff are able to discuss personal, health and social matters with boarders in their care. All boarding house staff receive first aid training with some having completed the four-day first aid at work course. The school ensures boarding houses have at least one member of staff with a current first aid

qualification on duty at all times. The school's referral application form for boarders contains a comprehensive medical questionnaire, designed to ensure the school obtain all relevant medical information on boarders before admission. Should the information not be received via the application form, the school contact parents directly or through the guardian agency which overseas students are registered with. The medical consent form has recently been updated. The current wording is unclear as to whether permission has been given for medical treatment or the administration of prescribed and non prescribed medication. Written records are kept of all medication, treatment, significant illnesses, accidents, injuries and first aid administered to boarders. A designated member of staff monitors systems in place and ensures parents are kept informed of any issues relating to their child's health and wellbeing. All medication is appropriately stored in suitable lockable cabinets sited in a secure room in the main school. A record is kept of the contents of cabinets, but a running total of the amount of medication stored is not maintained. Only staff who have received training in safe medicine handling administer medication. A significant number of boarders spoken to, and comments in a large proportion of questionnaires returned, are critical of the catering provision at the school. Boarders' opinions are supported by both care and teaching staff interviewed. Menus viewed did not indicate that boarders always receive a nutritionally balanced and healthy diet. There are not always options offered at mealtimes. Boarders and staff are critical of portion sizes which sometimes result in young people feeling hungry. There is evidence that boarders had raised these issues at school council meetings but inadequate action had been taken to address issues raised.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Bullying was not a concern or issue for boarders. Boarders are positive in their comments stating 'bullying is not an issue at the school'. One boarder raised a concern about verbal bullying, which was referred to the head teacher during the course of the inspection. The school has good anti-bullying policies in place that give clear information for staff, including guidance on what constitutes bullying and varying types of bullying. The policy also details how to work with those who may bully others. Staff are diligent about such issues and boarders were very positive in their comments about how staff addressed any concerns they had about things such as name calling. All boarders receive a copy of the school diary each term and it contains a section about bullying, advising boarders what to do if they feel they are being bullied. There are no current child protection concerns at the school. All staff interviewed knew how to respond to any concerns raised. However, the school's policies and procedures have not been reviewed and updated for some time. The head teacher is the named person but he has not updated his training for some time and was not aware of the changes in Cumbria Safeguarding procedures. The school has a clear complaints procedure and information about this is available to boarders. Boarders advise that staff respond to complaints and concerns raised and indicate that these are nearly always resolved informally. Boarders are all familiar with the formal system of raising complaints which is open to them. Young people are fully aware of the behaviour management systems in place at the school and the sanctions that are used to address unacceptable behaviour. The use of sanctions within the boarding houses is minimal, appropriate and recorded. Behaviour management policies clearly detail what sanctions are permissible for staff to use. Boarding house staff were observed to work very well with young people and treat them fairly and with respect, showing there are good working relationships between staff and boarders. A senior manager monitors all sanctions given to ensure consistency and fairness in staff practice. There is a good awareness among staff and boarders of the fire safety precautions. All new boarders

and staff receive fire safety instructions. Drills are carried out at different times of the day, fire safety equipment is checked regularly and a detailed record is kept. Staff show an appropriate regard for the privacy of boarders, routinely knock at bedrooms and wait to be invited to enter. House staff ensure that they supervise boarders in a manner which does not compromise their right to privacy. Suitable precautions are in place to ensure boarders live in a safe and secure environment. Electronic surveillance cameras cover the main entrance to the school. There are comprehensive health and safety policies and practices in place. Termly audits are carried out by an external specialist. All risk assessments and policies are updated annually. Although raised as an issue at the last inspection, staff recruitment practice does not fully comply with guidance contained in the national minimum standards. Interview notes are not kept, there is inadequate documented evidence that references verified with the referee and referees are not asked if they know of any reason why the applicant should not work with young people. All staff who are employed by the school have received an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. However, evidence indicates that some care staff have commenced work prior to such checks being received.

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

The provision is good.

All boarders have at least one member of staff they feel they would take a concern or issue worrying them. The majority of pupils spoke very positively about their relationship with care staff. The school provides two independent listeners, one of whom is Cantonese speaking. She visits the school each week and makes herself available to all boarders. Her visits are valued by boarders and she reports back to the management team if there are issues she feels they need to address. The pupil handbook provides information about this service. One of the strengths of the school is that boarding pupils are very supportive to one another. Suitable policies are in place to confirm the school's commitment to equal opportunities and an avoidance of discriminatory behaviours by young people. The school has an approach which values the diverse needs of its boarders and addresses any discrimination based on gender, disability, race, cultural or linguistic background, sexuality, academic or sporting ability. The school has good facilities for supporting pupils whose first language is not English.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Boarders have opportunities to raise issues informally and formally through a boarders' council and the school council. Some boarders are negative in their comments about the effectiveness of the boarders' meetings, feeling senior management do not give adequate responses to issues they raise. Boarders are able to maintain contact with their families and friends via telephone, mobile and email. Internet access for pupils outside school hours is limited but is being increased before the end of the month. New boarders receive a welcome pack and all new boarders spoken to indicated that they feel well supported both by staff and by other pupils. Boarders indicated that 'in coming to Lime House you make friends from all over the world'.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Boarders are strongly encouraged to hand over all money and valuables to staff for safekeeping. Some choose not to do this and there have been some incidents of petty pilfering. The school provide all boarders with a secure lockable storage space where they can keep belongings

safely. Since the last key inspection in 2002 there has been a significant refurbishment programme for the boarding houses. Bunk beds continue to be used for boarders above year 8, despite a previous recommendation that this practice should cease. However, only one boarder was unhappy with their use, for others it is not a major issue. There is a good standard of cleanliness in the boarding houses. Young people are accommodated in dormitories according to age and gender. The school endeavours to respond positively to any reasonable request from boarders to change rooms. All washing and toilet areas are suitably maintained and decorated. The boarding houses have sufficient numbers of toilets, baths, showers, urinals and wash hand basins for the maximum number of boarders they can accommodate. Some boarders have concerns about the efficiency of the heating systems and the adequacy of hot water supplies. These issues continue to be addressed as part of the boarding development plans.

## Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The school's promotion of equality and diversity is good. The school accommodates a range of overseas boarders. School documents and policies demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities and an avoidance of inappropriate discrimination at all times. Minority groups amongst boarders are appropriately supported and integration of European and non-European pupils is routinely encouraged by all staff. Bedroom policy is structured to prevent isolation from other groups and to encourage integration. The school ensures minority groups are not excluded or suffer discrimination. The school's documentation, various booklets and leaflets outline the services offered by the school and the admissions criteria. The statement of purpose is up to date and available to parents, prospective parents, staff and boarders. All boarders are provided with a copy of their own boarding pupil handbook, which contains all relevant information, including the 'Statement of boarding principles'. There is a Teachers handbook, which provides some information pertaining to boarding policies. There is no written guidance on the school's boarding policies in practice. Observation of evening duty shifts and viewing of staff duty rotas showed that there are sufficient staff on duty at all times to meet the needs of boarders. Systems are in place to ensure that staff know the whereabouts of all boarders at all times. There are suitable arrangements in place to enable the school to provide adequate cover for any staff absences or illness. The boarding staff team is made up of female staff, however, male teaching staff regularly undertake boarding duties. The school has compiled job descriptions for all boarding house staff, including GAP staff, that clearly detail the staff's responsibilities. The school does not have a formal induction programme for all boarding house staff. Neither do they undertake annual 'individual performance reviews' for all boarding house staff. Staff do feel well supported both by colleagues and by the senior managers but the school would benefit from formalising systems.

## 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 an accurate running total of medicines in the medication cabinet is maintained (NMS 15)
- ensure consent forms clearly show that consent has been given for medical treatment and the administration of prescribed and non prescribed medication (NMS 15)
- undertake a full review of the catering provision to ensure boarders are offered a balanced healthy diet (NMS 24)
- ensure that sufficient quantities of food, and options are available at all meal times (NMS 24)
- ensure the child protection policies are reviewed and updated (NMS 3)
- ensure the named person for child protection receives updated training relevant to their role (NMS 3)
- ensure recruitment procedures meet the requirements (NMS 38.2)
- ensure the use of bunk beds is restricted to boarders in year 8 or below, unless there are exceptional circumstances (NMS 42)
- ensure a formal induction is in place for staff with boarding duties (NMS 34)
- ensure all boarding house staff have their performance regularly reviewed (NMS 34).



## 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.**