

# Longridge Towers School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Leonard Hird
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<b>Head / Principal</b>	
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	25 September 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 long established co-educational independent boarding school is located in a rural area of the borders between England and Scotland. The school caters for pupils aged 4 years to 18 years and provides boarding places for pupils aged 8 years to 18 years, and is located in about 80 acres of grounds and woodland. There is a large main building and other sports, junior and preparatory buildings are located in the grounds. Boarding is divided into two houses, one for boys and one for girls. There were 24 boarders at the time of the inspection, although there is capacity for more. Boarders all have single accommodation and some rooms have en suite facilities.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this visit was to carry out an inspection of all key national minimum standards in the outcome areas for Every Child Matters which relate to boarding schools. The boarding provision at the school provides boarding pupils with a caring and safe environment that is supportive of their educational, social and emotional needs. The school is meeting all of the national minimum key standards for boarding schools. It is judged as good in many of the outcome areas and outstanding in economic well-being.

The school, however, is only satisfactory in the area of being healthy and this has limited its overall judgement to that of satisfactory. There is a small number of areas in which the school needs to improve and these are in the storage of medication, the training of staff in the safe handling and administration of medication, and implementing an up-to-date homely medication policy and procedure. The overall management and leadership of the school outstanding in the area of economic well-being, but in the boarding provision is good and is offering effective leadership and support to boarding pupils and staff.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

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

The recommendations made at the last inspection undertaken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection have been addressed appropriately by the school.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The boarding house staff team in conjunction with the school's personal, health, citizenship and social education programme provide age appropriate advice on matters such as health and personal relationships.

The health needs of boarding pupils are being satisfactorily addressed by the school. Weekly and full-time boarding pupils are appropriately registered with the local health services and regular visits are made by the school doctor.

Minor injuries and ailments are dealt with by members of staff who have received training in first aid, but they are not trained in the safe handling and administration of medication. Boarding pupils when unwell are looked after and supported by boarding house staff in a small sick bay

or in the individual pupil's room. Members of the boarding house staff ensure parents of unwell children are kept up-to-date of the progress of their child's health by phone or e-mail.

Medication is stored securely in the boarding house and the school's medical room, along with parental permissions for the administration of medication and emergency health treatment. There are generally clear procedures for the management and administration of medication in place, but the policy and procedure for the management and administration of homely medication is unclear. Some non-prescribed and homely medication is kept in the medication cupboards beyond their use by date and this has not been disposed of correctly.

The school provides boarding pupils with a good, healthy and nutritious diet which helps promote their health and physical well-being. Menus are well-planned in conjunction with the boarding pupils and catering manager. There is a good choice of food available to boarding pupils from the menu including a number of vegetarian choices. Boarding pupils spoke very positively about the food they receive. Comments included: 'the meals at the school are good and there is always plenty of choice for us' and 'we always get a good range of food to choose from and there is always plenty of healthy food to choose from.'

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

The provision is good.

All of the boarding pupils said that they felt really safe at the school and are supportive of each other. The school's anti-bullying and complaints policies and procedures, detailing how these important matters will be addressed, are readily available for parents, pupils and staff.

There are high expectations regarding standards of behaviour within the boarding house, and the boarding pupils are courteous and well mannered. There is little use of sanctions within the boarding house and no sanctions have been recorded this term. Boarding pupils confirm that the members of the boarding house staff team are extremely fair in dealing with disciplinary matters.

Regular recorded fire, security and safety checks are undertaken in the boarding houses to ensure the safety and security of boarding pupils. These safety checks are undertaken by staff from the school's estates department and in full accordance with the school's health and safety policies and procedures.

The school has a designated person with overall responsibility for safeguarding matters and they provide guidance to all staff on these matters. All staff including the designated person have received appropriate levels of safeguarding training and are fully aware of the relevant policies and reporting procedures. All members of staff working at the school have been recruited in full accordance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools and this confidential information is securely maintained.

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

The provision is good.

All of the boarding house staff team work very closely with parents, educational and support staff to ensure that the boarding pupils receive the help and support they require to manage their busy lives.

A wide range of leisure activities is available for boarding pupils to take part in during term time. These activities are well-supported by members of the boarding house staff. Full account is taken of the differing needs, abilities and backgrounds of boarding pupils when these events are planned. The range of activities to choose from is comprehensive and includes activities ranging from house and inter-school sports fixtures to outdoor pursuits, as well the less physical activities, such as art, falconry, drama and music.

The school is practising a policy of equal opportunity for all pupils attending the school. Boarding pupils are fully supported by house staff and other specialist support staff to enable them to really enjoy the demanding life of a boarder.

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

The provision is good.

Boarding pupils are fully and actively encouraged to take part in the day-to-day running of the boarding house. They can influence decisions made within the school by their representation on the various school committees and forums. Both the school and the boarding house have an open-door policy for boarders to speak to any member of staff at any time. There are excellent arrangements in place at the school to consult with boarding pupils. The school supports and addresses issues raised by individual or groups of boarding pupils. The school supported the development of meals being taken in the boarding house kitchen dining room area after school and at the weekends, and not in the main school dining hall, following representations by the boarding pupils. Boarding pupils confirm that they can influence decisions made in the school by their involvement in the different school committees and forums.

There are telephones made available in the school for boarding pupils to keep in contact with their family and friends. Boarding pupils can also make use of either e-mail or the more traditional methods of letter writing to keep in contact with parents, family and friends.

Great care is given to supporting boarding pupils when they first come into the boarding house. The experienced boarding house staff team ensure there is a warm welcome for both flexible, weekly and full boarding pupils, and there is a watchful eye kept over new boarding pupils so that homesickness does not become an issue.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarding pupils have their own bedside lockers for storing small personal items in. Larger and more valuable possessions can be stored securely in the boarding house by staff. Records are maintained of all valuables and money kept on behalf of boarding pupils by the school.

The accommodation provided for the boarding pupils is very clean, extremely homely and well-maintained. The individual bedrooms, visited by invitation during the inspection, were found to be large, pleasantly decorated and well personalised by the boarding pupils. There are separate boarding areas for boys and girls, with some of the bedrooms having en suite facilities. The levels of privacy for washing, toileting, showering and bathing in the boarding

houses are very good. The boarding pupils commented: 'that it was great to have their own bedroom and that they thought this was very special compared to other boarding schools they knew of.'

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The school has effective policies and procedures in place for dealing with equality and diversity. Boarding pupils are encouraged to be supportive of each other and many of them commented on this, as well as indicating that they all worked and lived together as a harmonious group in the boarding house and the wider community in general.

The school provides a well-designed, informative and easily understood statement of its principles and practices on boarding for parents, pupils and staff. There are good systems of risk assessment in place to ensure the health and safety of boarding pupils. All of the administration systems used in the school ensure the safety and welfare of the boarding pupils is paramount.

The head of boarding and the acting headteacher are providing enthusiastic, positive and effective levels of support for the boarding house staff team and pupils. Staffing levels currently meet the needs of all the different types of boarders at the school. All of the boarding house staff team are well-experienced in their individual roles helping them to provide a stable and very caring environment for boarding pupils to live in.

All of the boarders spoken with said that they feel really well cared for by this popular staff team.

## 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 opportunities are provided for training and updating boarding house staff in the safe handling and administration of medication (NMS Boarding Schools 34)
- ensure the school has secured, and follows, qualified medical or nursing advice in a written protocol on the provision of non-prescription 'household' medicines to boarders (NMS Boarding Schools 15)
- ensure that all medications are disposed of in accordance with the written prescription or instructions from the pharmacy, and is not kept for general use by other boarders or added to 'stock for such use' (NMS Boarding Schools 15).