

# Farleigh School

Inspection report for Boarding School

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<b>Inspection date</b>	24/09/2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Bridgette Lowe
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<b>Setting address</b>	Farleigh School, Red Rice, ANDOVER, Hampshire, SP11 7PW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01264 710766
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Farleigh House Trustees Limited
<b>Head/ Principal</b>	Father Simon Everson
<b>Nominated person</b>	Father Simon Everson
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	11/10/2007

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

## 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**

Farleigh School is a Catholic co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged 3 years to 13 years. At the time of inspection there were approximately 90 full time and weekly boarders and 40 flexi boarders.

The school is situated a short distance from Andover and stands in 57 acres of attractive park and woodland providing opportunity for a wide variety of sports and leisure activities. Boarding is separated in to three boarding areas, senior boys, senior girls and junior boarding. At the time of inspection junior boarders were accommodated in dorms within the main school house. Senior boarding accommodation is within the school grounds close to the main building.

The school's Headmaster is committed to the principles of the Catholic faith while welcoming children of all denominations to the school.

## **Summary**

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

The purpose of this key announced inspection was to ensure that the school was continuing to meet the national minimum standards for boarding schools and is continuing to promote the welfare and safeguarding of boarding pupils. A boarding sector additional inspector also took an active role in the inspection. All key standards for boarding schools were addressed and the recommendation made at the last inspection was revisited. Boarder and parent feedback have been taken into account while carrying out the inspection. All boarders had the opportunity to complete a questionnaire and numerous boarders were spoken with throughout the inspection.

This is a very caring school that is child-centred and achieves high standards throughout. The school has continued to develop since the last inspection and is committed to raising standards further in the future.

Children receive excellent health care with 24 hour qualified nurse cover by the schools matrons. There is a positive and confident focus on child protection and safeguarding that results in the children feeling very safe at the school. Facilities for children to achieve and enjoy are numerous with exceptional levels of support for each child. Systems and avenues for children to have a voice and input into their lives at the school are actively engaged in by children, whose opinions are listened to and acted on. The management of the school is highly effective and coordinated. Staff are respectful of and sensitive to children's needs and wishes.

There are no recommendations made at this inspection.

Boarders and parents are extremely positive about the boarding experience at Farleigh School. Boarders reported, 'boarding is amazing, our houseparents are understanding and treat us with love.' 'Boarding at Farleigh School is like one big family'. 'It is the best school ever'.

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

At the last inspection in 2007 the school received one recommendation. This was to ensure that the complaints policy was reviewed and updated to include Ofsted details and clear information relating to the complaints procedure. The school has fully actioned this recommendation with clear information available to parents and pupils both within the parents' handbook and within the school website.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The boarders have access to high quality medical treatment and responsive first aid provision. The medical room, located in the heart of the school, is very efficiently run by the school's matrons who are qualified nurses. They provide cover 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All procedures and policies relating to health matters are maintained very effectively and enable staff to practice to very high standards. The boarders are very positive about the facilities and care given. Boarders reported being able to go to the matrons with any concern or issue. The medical centre has been modernised with outstanding hygiene standards.

Health information for each boarder is requested from parents and updated on a regular basis. This information is shared with staff on a need to know basis and enables staff to care appropriately for the children. Record keeping throughout the medical centre is excellent. The medical centre data base details any contact with boarders and is closely monitored by the matrons. The boarders have access to health surgeries twice a week when local general practitioners visit the school. The matrons are highly trained and very suitably qualified to administer health care including first aid. Consents for the administration of first aid and medication administration are in place providing protection for the boarders and staff. The matrons are committed to keeping up to date with school health issues and regularly attend conferences and training. Boarders who are ill receive constant supervision by the matrons in very comfortable surroundings. The school has a very effective personal, social and health education programme that is age appropriate and relevant to the needs of the children. Feedback from the boarders is that they feel comfortable with accessing the medical centre if necessary.

The catering staff responsible for the provision of meals have a very good understanding of children's dietary needs and wishes in relation to a balanced diet. The variety, quality and quantity of food is excellent. The school excels in its practice of providing organic food where possible. The school caters for many different diets,

for cultural and medical reasons. The children can access fresh vegetables, salad and fruit at all meal times, with toast available for the top year group before bed time. The boarders are actively involved in the food provision via regular surveys from the catering department. Suggestions by the boarders have been acted on with boarders being particularly positive about the opportunity to prepare meals and learn cooking skills during boarding time. Feedback from the boarders was very positive about the food provision, with comments such as, 'the food at Farleigh is excellent'.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders live in an environment which they reported makes them feel safe. The school pays high regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the boarding pupils.

The school has a robust and responsive anti-bullying policy which is well known by boarding pupils. The boarders feel confident that issues associated with bullying behaviour would be rigorously addressed, although one boarder reported, 'I have been here nine years and there has never been any bullying'. The school provides excellent education to boarders, parents and staff in relation to cyber bullying.

The boarders are protected from the risk of harm or abuse by appropriately trained and experienced staff with robust policies and procedures that staff are fully informed of. Suitable child protection training is provided on a regular basis to all staff employed at the school including non-teaching or boarding staff and gap students. The staff have a clear understanding of key child protection matters and the action they need to take if they suspect a child is at risk of, or is, being harmed. The school liaise with the local authority designated officer in respect of producing robust policies, practices and procedures. There is a real and confident focus on safeguarding and child protection with competent and experienced designated staff taking overall responsibility for this. The boarders reported that they feel very safe at the school and have a variety of adults they can talk to.

The behaviour of the children seen throughout the inspection was exemplary. The children were relaxed and very open about their experiences as a boarder. The school addresses inappropriate or negative behaviour in a sensitive and very suitable manner. Much emphasis is placed on positive behaviour and living together in a family environment, with outstanding outcomes and happy children. The boarders understand what sanctions can be implemented and feel these are fair and only used when necessary. Parents reported being extremely happy with their child's boarding experience and expressed the communication between the houseparents and themselves as a particular strength. Complaints or concerns raised are extremely low in number and this is a reflection of the very close relationships staff have with parents. Parents can easily access the school's complaints policy on their website. The boarders feel confident in raising any issues with a variety of staff.

The boarders are protected from the risk of fire. All aspects of fire safety are

addressed in a suitable manner with regular drills, tests and servicing ensuring the well-being of pupils and staff alike. The school strives to maintain a safe environment and continues to make improvements. The boarders clearly know how to evacuate in the event of an alarm being activated. An independent annual health and safety audit is undertaken to ensure that all areas are safe and promote the health and safety of the pupils at Farleigh School.

The school has a key-pad entry system to all building entry points thus maximising the safety of pupils and the general security of the premises. Boarders were very clear about areas within the school site which are out of bounds. They are well versed with the schools health and safety guidance especially in relation to playing in the woodland area behind the school and the 'Fortress Farleigh' outdoor play structure.

Suitable changing and bathing facilities provide boarders with very good privacy. Boarders reported that all staff are very respectful of their privacy especially at times of showering or changing. Children are treated with dignity and respect; this was the same for the manner in which the children responded to staff too. Improvements have been made to a number of shower and bathroom facilities which boarders welcomed.

The boarders are protected by the robust recruitment procedures in place. Staff with responsibilities for recruitment procedures have attended safer recruitment training. All visitors are checked and supervised if moving around the school providing enhanced protection for children.

The school ensures that any risks posed to boarders are addressed in a comprehensive fashion. Excellent risk assessments address all environmental, activity and leisure matters without limiting opportunities for boarders to engage in an active and fulfilling experience. High risk activities are equally well addressed and risk assessed; for example, the outdoor play structure and overseas trips.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school excels in its approach to offer all children an outstanding variety of activities and continues to strengthen and expand the activities programme in the evenings and at weekends. The support given to children and the organisation involved in enabling them to access activities is outstanding. The boarders were seen to actively engage in a wide range of activities with pleasure.

Personal support to individual children is an area that the school excels in. A cohesive committed staff team ensure all boarders have someone to talk to if they need to and this is confirmed by the boarders. Staff communicate with the children at ease, and children are at ease talking to staff. Boarders have access to an independent listener who is available should boarders need this. Throughout the inspection children were very positive, happy and relaxed and spoke freely about life at the

school. Feedback from boarders confirmed the variety of staff they would go to for support. Boarders reported that their houseparents are, 'kind, caring and loving'. Parents are very praising of the support provided by the school with feedback such as 'pastoral care is excellent, the staff are very caring and nurturing'.

The school values the different cultural needs of its boarders. During the inspection the inspectors heard of, or saw, no inappropriate discrimination of gender, disability, race, religion or culture. All children are given the same opportunities to participate in all areas of the school life. Overseas boarders and new boarders confirmed that they are made to feel very welcomed and fully supported, to ease their transition into boarding at the school.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The boarders are considered an integral aspect of the school with their views and wishes being acknowledged and acted upon. They are encouraged and supported to contribute their views through the boarding council and school council provision. These forums are open and interactive allowing boarders a formal arena to contribute their thoughts. The boarders reported their views and opinions are always listened to with actions and outcomes clearly displayed in all boarding houses. Boarders also have many informal and formal opportunities to express their views. Suggestions boxes are in boarding houses and boarders reported these are a good avenue to air their opinions. The boarders have opportunities to express their thoughts through regular catering surveys and boarding satisfaction surveys. The school harbours an ethos where boarders are encouraged to show responsibility, co-operation and respect.

The boarders are assisted to maintain contact with their families and friends. Mobile phones are not allowed, although boarders reported this not being an issue as there are plenty of private telephones. The school maintains excellent communication links with parents. Parents reported the weekly newsletter from the boarding staff is a positive development keeping them informed of their child's boarding experience. The boarders state the school helps them to keep in touch with their parents while they are living away from home.

New boarders are helped to settle into the school by an effective 'shepherd' system and an array of information available to them. Boarders reported they are made to feel very welcome when they start boarding and this helps them settle in quickly. There is clear and concise information relating to boarding, available for parents to access on the school's website or through the parents' handbook.

Relationships between staff and the boarders are exceptional with very happy children who obviously enjoy their time at the school. Boarders said, 'boarding at Farleigh is amazing, there is nothing I would change'. 'It's like one big family'. 'I think boarding at Farleigh is the best aspect of the school'.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

The boarders are provided with homely accommodation that is well organised and highly supervised. The houses provide appropriate protection and separation of boarders by age and gender. All boarding provision is of an excellent standard with improvements to shower and wash areas since the last inspection. Boarders are overwhelmingly positive about their boarding houses and reported having a very good and enjoyable boarding experience.

The entire boarding accommodation is very well lit, heated and comfortable. All communal areas in the boarding houses are brightly painted and child friendly. The boarders have areas around their beds that they can personalise and sufficient storage for clothes. Dormitory facilities have been improved since the last inspection including new bedroom furniture for boarders. The standard of maintenance and cleanliness is high throughout the boarding houses. The toilet and washing provision is very good and ensures privacy for all boarders when using them. All the boarders are respectful of each other's possessions with no concerns about theft being highlighted before or during the inspection. Boarders are able to report any issues directly to the maintenance manager via a book located in the boarding houses. Boarders reported boarding at Farleigh is like living in a big family home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school achieves its aims in providing each individual child with a high standard of care and support in an environment where they are free to express their views and opinions. Individual needs are very well catered for, from religious to dietary needs. Different cultures are explored with children being involved in links with overseas schools and charity fund raising events.

The management of the school is highly effective and coordinated. The welfare of the boarders is given a high priority on a daily basis and at governor level. There is a well structured senior management team who are very well informed of their roles and responsibilities and effective in delivery. The boarders are cared for by high numbers of staff who are trained and sensitive to their needs. The boarding staff receive regular training to ensure they are up to date with areas such as child protection, first aid and fire safety. The staff interviewed and observed during the inspection are committed to providing excellent boarding provision. The monitoring of all areas and records is excellent, with data analysed to consider risks and address any areas identified for improvement.

The school provides clear and detailed information to parents and boarders about the boarding practices and principles of the school. The school's website has a wealth of information for parents and prospective parents to view. Information for boarders

has been improved since the last inspection with a colourful child-friendly handout informing pupils of what to expect from boarding at the school.

The management of the boarding provision has a high profile in the school with designated roles and clear lines of responsibility. The recruitment of increased numbers of boarding staff is a clear commitment that the school is continually developing. Boarders reported feeling at ease to talk with all staff at any level should they have a concern.

The school governors are very active and put the boarding provision as a high priority on meeting agendas.

The boarders are protected by high quality risk assessments that cover any crises that may relate to their welfare. The risk assessment formats have been updated since the last inspection and are now of a high standard. Additional staff have been employed to support the bursar in this role and ensure that all areas of risk and health and safety are regularly monitored and reviewed.

The boarding houses are very well organised and provide a safe and secure environment for children. The number of staff available for the supervision of boarders is consistently very high. There is clear information for boarders to know which member of staff is available at all times of the day and night. The boarders report they have no difficulty in finding a member of staff when they need to. The staff receive appropriate training commencing with induction and regular updates, and are given copies of written guidance on boarding policies and practice.

The boarders are very closely supervised, and staff are aware of their whereabouts at all times. They are very well informed of the boundaries in place in regards to where they can and cannot access on the school site including the school grounds. There are clear protocols for staffing of organised trips away from school.

The relationships between staff and children are relaxed, friendly and appropriate in manner. This is an extremely happy school with very happy children, with staff who are committed to providing very high standards of care, in a most sensitive manner.

Parents reported, 'Farleigh offers an excellent boarding experience and I have been extremely happy with the pastoral care' and 'brilliant pastoral care, food, accommodation, activities, parental access, communication-all excellent.'