

Lancaster Royal Grammar School

Inspection report for Boarding School

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Inspector	Monica Farrimond
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Nominated person	Andrew Jarman
Date of last inspection	18/01/2007

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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

Lancaster Royal Grammar School is a boys educational day and boarding school situated on the city edge. It is close to a range of local amenities and transportation. Full and weekly boarding is provided for pupils between the ages of 11 to 18 years. Pupils come from overseas as well as the United Kingdom.

The school has 181 pupils who are boarders. There are four boarding houses the newest of which was opened in 2008. The pupils are predominately white British with a small number of pupils reflecting other ethnic origins, the largest such group being Hong Kong Chinese. Recreational and dormitory facilities are provided for each year group.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This key announced inspection had a short lead in time. It assessed every outcome heading covering all the key Boarding School National Minimum Standards.

This is an outstanding service in every respect. The school is well organised and managed. The management team are highly motivated, qualified and competent. All staff are recruited safely. Practice is extremely well coordinated and fully embraces the Every Child Matters Framework, designed to improve services for children and young people. Teamwork is extremely effective. There is regular consultation and transparent communication with pupils and parents. Many positive comments have been received from pupils about services provided, the management and organisation of the school.

All outcomes are recorded as being outstanding. Pupils experience healthy lifestyles. They are well focussed and take every opportunity to develop skills and prepare for their futures.

Excellent relationships have been established between staff, pupils and parents. Pupils live in the safe and comfortable surroundings of the school and within their individual boarding houses.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils' welfare is closely monitored and their health needs are extremely well met. The health of pupils is promoted positively. The policies, procedures and guidance linked to a range of health issues provide suitable direction for staff when faced with specific problems. Staff proactively promote the health of pupils with very positive outcomes for pupils. Pupils' welfare is closely monitored and their health needs are extremely well met.

The medical centre is managed by a trained nurse who offers an excellent service to pupils who are ill, or who need medical advice. A doctor visits twice a week and appropriate dental and optical arrangements are usually made by parents. The school is pro-active when addressing issues relating to drugs, alcohol, or issues relating to sexual behaviour and health. The ethos of the school promotes education relating to these issues, which enables open, honest discussions and positive outcomes. Pupils confirm satisfaction with how health and well-being is managed. Medication storage, administration and recording of both household and prescribed medication are good. Parental permission for administering medicines is gained. Staff are suitably trained and have attended specialist training to support pupils with specific medical needs.

Food served is of outstanding quality. A salad bar, fruit and a selection of drinks are available and pupils are given choices at mealtimes. Menus are designed with nutritional factors and government guidelines taken into account. Meals are varied, healthy and nutritionally balanced and include favourite food preferences of the pupils. Meetings have taken place recently between pupils and the catering staff in an effort to create a dialogue and ultimately satisfy a wider range of pupils' tastes. The catering manager ensures boys' birthdays are celebrated. Special themed meals support work on looking at cultural diversity. Pupils expressed their full satisfaction with the quality and quantity of meals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school makes every effort to reduce the impact of bullying on pupils. Pupils indicate they have no serious concerns about bullying and they feel safe at the school. Many pupils commented, 'bullies are dealt with by staff.' Pupils unanimously state that they have someone they would talk to if they were bullied and they were confident that staff would respond to any matters highlighted by them. Detailed risk assessments are produced to highlight concerns and vulnerability of the pupils at the school. Information held on the pupils is comprehensive, respected and confidentially handled.

The response to health, safety and security is well co-ordinated. Fire and Rescue Services visit the school ensuring fire precautions are safe. Advice, when provided, is

followed. Pupils are familiar with the fire procedures, describing a recent fire drill that took place days before the inspection. Appropriate information is displayed around the school. A comprehensive fire risk assessment and risk management identification system are in place. Records are available to show that fire safety equipment is tested regularly and serviced appropriately. The school operates a health and safety committee which meets regularly. Servicing contracts for electrical, gas and fire safety are established. Portable appliance testing is routinely undertaken ensuring all electrical equipment is safe. This includes the boys' personal electrical items. Risk assessments have been carried out on all aspects of the school premises and grounds. No hazards were observed. The response taken to ensure all activities undertaken remain safe is subject to robust risk assessment procedures. All high risk activities are carried out with qualified instructors. The school has its own policy based on the Lancashire County model for all trips which is reviewed annually by the governing body. Risks associated with challenging activities are clearly being minimised.

Staff recruitment checks are robust, including enhanced criminal records bureau checks, references, qualifications, application forms and records of the interview. Suitable vetting of visitors to the school is also undertaken with identity checks being carried out before access is permitted. The pupils know that all visitors should be wearing official passes and contact staff if they have any concerns. The systems in place to keep pupils safe are good and feedback from them indicates that they feel safe within their environment. Written safeguarding procedures and guidance for staff are in place. Safeguarding information is given to all staff as well as parents and pupils. Any potential safeguarding issues that have arisen since the previous inspection have been managed appropriately with the guidance and procedures being followed.

The school's disciplinary, rewards, and sanctions, conduct and behaviour policies are provided for staff, parents and pupils. Disciplinary matters are dealt with well. Pupils are aware of the expected standards of behaviour, and believe the current system is fair. Their behaviour during the inspection was exemplary.

Pupils have a wide range of staff they can approach, should they be worried or need to complain. The list is publicised in literature given to all pupils, who demonstrated a recognition of who these people are and where they can be found. No negative feedback was received from pupils on this matter. Complaints are collated and monitored effectively by senior staff.

Privacy is not an area of concern for the pupils; they feel that staff are sensitive and respect their right to privacy and dignity. All personal and sensitive information is held securely.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils benefit from good support and opportunities that encourage them to achieve both socially and educationally. For example, there are a wide range of activities arranged outside of teaching time that include sport, hobby and recreational activities. Pupils were observed to live and work as member of a multi-cultural society, accepting its discipline and responsibilities and respecting the rights and needs of others. They are being prepared with skills relevant to adult life and the world of work and leisure.

Pupils have access to a choice of indoor and outdoor recreational areas that are in use during the evenings and at weekends. They speak with enthusiasm about the range of organised activities they are involved in at these times. Staff, parents and pupils have access to the schools equal opportunities policy statement. Staff are sensitive towards cultural, religious and gender issues. The school accommodates pupils from overseas and make arrangements to recognise and acknowledge cultural needs, for example, celebrations of the Chinese New Year.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Regular consultation between staff and pupils maintains positive relationships throughout the school. Pupils are consulted on a range of issues affecting their daily lives, including food and boarding routines; each pupil feels that their views are important and taken seriously. This promotes confidence, inclusion and pride in the school and its ethos. There is clear pupil involvement in everything that occurs at the school. The school operates a boys' committee that has elected members from each school year. There are school prefects, and pupils enthusiastically discuss their roles. There is a great deal of 'pride in performance' from prefects who are provided with clear guidance on their duties. Parents are provided with regular school updates, letters and reports on their child's progress. Meetings are convened if there are any concerns. The school management team also facilitate communication through the school website, school prospectus, parental handbook, emails, school reports and newsletters, telephone and face-to-face meetings.

The school is supportive towards pupils maintaining family and parental contact and there is ample provision for them to make and receive private telephone calls. They also maintain contact by email, letters and the use of personal mobile phones. Contact between staff and parents is good and this is reflected in the records maintained by the school.

The relationships between the boarding staff and pupils were observed to be outstanding throughout the inspection.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The boarding houses provide a safe environment, pleasantly decorated, and providing sufficient space and excellent resources to meet pupils' needs. There has been substantial investment over the last three years and the school has vastly improved the accommodation for the boarders. The school development plan highlights the numerous improvements and developments that have taken place as well as those that are planned for the future. There are four boarding houses. Storey House accommodates the boys in their first two years at the school. Frankland House accommodates the boys in their third year at the school and School House and Ashton House accommodate the senior boys from Year 10 to the Upper Sixth. The standard of each boarding house is good, with the newly refurbished School House assessed as outstanding. The standards of the toilet and bathing facilities are good. Maintenance of the whole school site is coordinated well. A rolling programme of refurbishment and development ensures that the excellent appearance is maintained.

Appropriate systems are in place for storing and administering pocket money. Pupils have access to a lockable and secure place where they are able to keep their possessions safe.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a clear, detailed statement of boarding principles and practice. It includes appropriate policies and guidance and this is provided in various formats to staff, parents and pupils. It is updated annually. The school has the full range of policies as outlined within the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Policies and procedures at the school are both accessible and known to staff.

The school is well organised and managed. There are good levels of organisation throughout the boarding, with the Deputy Headmaster (Pastoral) effectively monitoring all aspects of boarding. The supervision of boarders is good. An exceptional quality of service is provided. There is a comprehensive development plan outlining how the school's operation will be maintained. Pupils' developmental needs are clearly being met. Pupils recognise the staff who have specific responsibility for their welfare and know who is on duty, and where to go should they need assistance during the night. The staff spoken with demonstrated an awareness of their specific roles and their responsibilities in fulfilling that role.

The staff, management team and governors have a wealth of experience and extensive range of qualifications. The staff understand and have skills to support the needs of the pupils. Practice meets with all the requirements of national minimum standards. Staff are extremely well motivated. Deployment of staff is good. Rotas demonstrate that staffing levels are being maintained. Staff are clear about their

roles, balancing their work so that the individual and collective needs of the pupils are met whilst ensuring that the necessary administrative tasks are undertaken. Records at this school show clarity of purpose in how staff are being managed. It is evident that induction and foundation training are being provided. Training, support and supervision are good and clearly linked to staff personal development.