

# Padworth College

Inspection report for Boarding School

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<b>Inspection date</b>	17/02/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Clare Davies
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	11/11/2008

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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**

Padworth College is an independent co-educational boarding and day school for students from 13 to 19 years. There are approximately 110 students, 80 per cent of whom board. The college provides an international community with the majority of students from overseas for whom English is an additional language. The boarding accommodation is located on the college site allowing boarders easy access to academic resources, recreational facilities and extensive grounds. The school is situated in a rural setting in Berkshire, close to Reading.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an announced inspection to assess Padworth College against the national minimum standards for boarding schools. The inspection of the education practice was undertaken by the Independent Schools Inspectorate at the same time and is reported upon separately.

There are good outcomes for boarders and the promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The small boarding community offers a friendly, intimate environment and is appreciated by many students who are living far from their families overseas. There are clear policies and procedures in place relating to the safeguarding of boarders. All staff have received training on child protection matters and there are robust procedures for safer recruitment, ensuring all new staff are suitably checked before they start work. The boarding staff work well together to meet the pastoral needs of the boarders and a qualified nurse ensures that health and medical needs are well met. Six recommendations have been made in relation to shortfalls in areas of health and safety, safer use of the internet and improvements to the boarding accommodation.

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

Since the last inspection the college has made good improvements in safeguarding. Recruitment checks are robust, the child protection policy has been updated and all staff have received training in this area. There are no remaining recommendations from the environmental health department and boarders have increased access to sports and leisure facilities on and off site.

## Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Personal, social and health education is delivered formally through the curriculum and beyond the classroom throughout the boarding experience. Students are educated about personal hygiene, physical activity and healthy eating. The health and emotional wellbeing of boarders is managed well by boarding staff, the nurse and teaching staff supported by sound policies and procedures. The nurse has suitable resources to inform students about sexual health and the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs. Cartoon style leaflets are effective in supporting students for whom English is an additional language. Some students over 18 years are permitted to smoke in a designated area, any younger students found smoking are sanctioned which includes a fine donated to a charity.

The college employs one qualified nurse who is available in the mornings offering medical care and guidance. Medication is stored securely and administered with clear records made. The nurse maintains a single record for each boarder of any medication administered ensuring that a safe system is in place. Boarding staff may give some pain relief when the nurse is not present; the records of this are made available to the nurse each morning. There is a good working relationship with the local surgery and weekly access to a doctor in addition to emergencies. The school obtains written parental consent to ensure that medication and emergency treatment is provided in accordance with parents' wishes however, this consent does not include the administration of first aid.

The health needs of each boarder are identified and recorded as part of the admission process. Information is shared with relevant people throughout the college on a need to know basis for example where a student may have a food allergy, the catering team are informed of this. 13 college staff are trained in first aid and the nurse undertakes additional training to maintain her professional registration. There is a designated room for students who are ill; this is often used by day students who are unwell and awaiting collection by their parents. Generally boarders are able to remain in their rooms with regular checks from boarding staff and the nurse.

The catering team provide boarders with a varied and nutritious diet. Boarders expressed their dissatisfaction with the food in a survey towards the inspection, where half of those who responded did not agree with the statement that 'food is good'. However, in discussion this was not fully supported and some reported that the food has improved as a result of the school listening to their views. There is a range of options from hot meals, salad bar, sandwiches and soup. The catering manager has met with the student council to discuss the menus and some changes have been implemented. The menus always offer potatoes and rice or noodles to meet the requests of the students. Meals are planned carefully to ensure a balanced diet is available and the catering team do well to accommodate the preferences of students from many nationalities. The catering staff are trained in food hygiene and following a visit from the environmental health department they were commended

on their practice and awarded a four star rating. Boarders have all their meals and snacks provided in the main dining room. Small kitchen areas in the boarding houses provide kettles and microwaves for students to prepare their own snacks if they wish. A fully equipped kitchen is available for boarders to use as an activity at the weekends; this also enables boys and girls to mix socially. The college does not offer a tuck shop or provide vending machines for snacks. This encourages the students to regularly attend the dining room. There are weekly trips to a local supermarket when students can purchase some snacks of their choice.

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

The provision is good.

Procedures to guard against bullying are effective and clear guidelines given to staff and students. The student contract lists expectations of behaviour and includes being respectful of others. Boarders report that they do not feel bullying is an issue at Padworth College and on occasion when there is an incident it is dealt with by staff. The staff team appropriately consider any bullying behaviour as a safeguarding matter, ensuring support is provided to the bully and the victim of bullying.

College staff are fully aware of the potential dangers for students to misuse technology to cause upset and distress to others. Records show that some disciplinary action has been taken against some students who have engaged in cyber bullying. The impact of this behaviour and the promotion of e-safety has been raised in tutor groups and assemblies, embracing a national initiative within schools and colleges 'Safer Internet Day'. Although staff awareness is good in promoting safer use of technology, the college policy does not include reference to the use of hardware that permits remote access to the internet outside the parameters of the college network. The college acknowledges that internet access cannot be denied and students should be supported in using it safely.

The college has a policy on child protection and clear procedures for staff to follow if they should have concerns. The policy is available on the website for parents to view. The staff handbook includes additional policy documents promoting safe working practices. The designated person is suitable qualified having attended inter-agency training and she delivers training to all college staff. In addition the Principal is a member of the local safeguarding children's board which ensures the college is regularly updated on safeguarding matters, locally and nationally.

Each student enters into a contract where expectations of their behaviour are listed. For clarity, this document is available in additional languages. Boarders report that the rules are fair and clearly understood. Consequences may involve gating, detention or some level of community service. Failure to return back to college on time after being out at the weekend is likely to result in losing the opportunity to go out independently the following weekend. College staff create an open atmosphere of discussion with boarders, building up sound relationships and mutual respect. As a result, there are low levels of disciplinary incidents instead the emphasis is on

rewards with commendations. Systems are in place to respond to any serious incidents of misbehaviour and appropriate records are maintained detailing liaison with parents and guardians.

The handbook for boarders and their parents provides details of the complaints procedure. Boarders are encouraged to talk to any member of staff with any concern or complaint they may have. There have been no formal complaints from students, good relationships between them and the staff assist in their resolution at an informal stage. Records confirm that any complaint is appropriately dealt with. The college carries out comprehensive recruitment of staff with robust vetting procedures to ensure staff are suitable to work with young people. All staff have clearance through the Criminal Records Bureau and references are received and verified before employment commences. There are effective systems to safely manage the presence of visitors to the school with signage to the office where registration occurs and a visitors badge is issued.

Following an inspection by the fire service last summer, the college was required to take some action to improve fire safety across the site. A lot of work has been completed ensuring that the college is compliant in meeting fire safety regulations. Staff and boarders are aware of the fire safety procedures and have experienced evacuating from the boarding areas. Equipment is regularly checked, a fire risk assessment is in place and staff receive training in fire safety. Some self-closing doors are prevented from closing by door wedges or raised carpet; this potentially leaves the building at risk from a fire spreading quickly throughout.

The college site is generally well maintained with on-site staff to respond to maintenance issues. Boarders are advised of safety issues such as: areas out of bounds, the fire procedures and the appropriate use of electrical equipment. Security measures are in place though not formally reviewed. Written risk assessments cover the environment, activities and trips off site. Some are more detailed than others; they are reviewed by the director of boarding.

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

The provision is good.

The college lacks on-site facilities for sport and indoor games however the staff make great efforts to ensure boarders have access to a good range and choice of activities. Some of the on-site facilities include use of the tennis courts, an outdoor swimming pool and a grass court for badminton or volleyball within the college grounds. Indoor activities include table tennis, dance, art, drama and board games. To supplement the programme there are a wide range of activities using off-site facilities with regular football twice a week, basketball and use of a gym weekly. Other activities include horse riding, go-carting, kick boxing and judo. Every Friday evening the cinema is made available and weekend outings offer trips to surrounding towns and leisure parks. There are visits to cultural and historical places of interest as part of the British culture programme. The college is planning to re-introduce the Duke of

Edinburgh Award scheme this year that will provide further opportunities for activity. Boarders report that they enjoy the activities on offer but would like more on-site sports facilities.

The boarders receive good levels of personal support from staff. There are members of the pastoral team available at all times who have developed sound relationships with the boarders. The Principal and director of boarding make themselves available with centrally located offices and an open door policy. Students report that they are approachable and responsive to what they have to say. The nurse is recognised as a key member of staff for personal support in addition to boarding staff. The good behaviour of boarders and low level of incidents are indicative of happy students who feel secure in their surroundings.

Student leaders are selected to represent the student body and to be ambassadors for the college. They have received training on how to be supportive to students and to listen to others; they regularly meet with the Principal. Boarders are informed of an independent listener, whose contact details and a photograph are posted on the notice boards, if they wish to speak with someone outside of the college. The independent listener is introduced at the beginning of term in assembly and makes herself available to students if required. Boarders report that they like making friends from so many different nationalities. A boarder said that he liked boarding at Padworth College because, 'there are small numbers of students and the college is friendly'.

There is no inappropriate discrimination; policies on equality and diversity are central to the ethos of the college. The integration of students from 19 different countries is testament to the atmosphere where difference is celebrated and integral to the curriculum in the classroom and the boarding environment. Weekly visits to a local abbey are arranged for students of the Catholic faith to attend mass and there are on site Christian fellowship meetings. Support is given to students to observe their religion on site or at a community place of worship.

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

The provision is good.

Students are involved with decision making using formal avenues such as the student council, tutor groups, surveys and weekly boarding house meetings. Many boarders reported that they are also able to give their views directly to the boarding staff, the director of boarding and the Principal. It is a strength that boarders feel able to approach staff directly in addition to the regular formal structures for gathering their views. In response to listening to the views of boarders there have been changes to the menus and the activities.

Boarders can contact family and friends by using their personal mobile telephones, email, Skype and using the school pay phones. Boarders report that if they did not have access to a telephone the staff would help them contact their parents. Most



boarders from overseas remain in the UK for half term holidays, residing with guardians as arranged by their parents. College staff contact parents and guardians to update them on student progress and any concerns. College news is shared through newsletters each term.

New boarders are welcome to visit before they start but this does not always happen for those students who live outside of the United Kingdom. Some documents have been translated into additional languages to support new students and their parents who are not fluent in English. Boarding staff take these matters into consideration when allocating bedrooms to ensure that another student who has the same first language is nearby. The student handbook provides practical information and the boarding staff give additional information about boarding slowly to ensure that the new boarders do not become overwhelmed. Many students described how they were made to feel welcome and how other boarders were assigned to help and show them around.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Students are able to have keys to secure their rooms or the option of having a safe deposit box. A dedicated member of staff supports students from overseas in opening a local bank account and can assist with managing finances. There are three distinct areas of boarding accommodation in two buildings. There is a girls' boarding house and this is linked to a mixed boarding house with girls accommodated on the ground floor and boys on upper floors. Locked doors provide suitable gender separation. The second area is within the main house just for boys. The main house is a listed building and consequently there are practical and financial challenges in maintaining it. The premises have long been adapted as school buildings but require continual updating with priority required for the main house. The toilet and washing facilities throughout are satisfactory with some more modern than others. Boarders are comfortable in their boarding accommodation and report that they like it, the majority have single rooms with the largest shared room for a maximum of three students.

The girls have use of two common rooms providing television, soft furnishings and board games. The boys have one common room within the main house and access to a games room with table tennis equipment. The boys would like another common room area though they are permitted to use classrooms for playing computer games.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The Principal provides effective leadership, ably supported by the director of boarding and the senior management team. All staff demonstrate a commitment to

the welfare of boarders, working well across departments. There are clear lines of communication within the management of boarding provision, the size of the college allows for face-to-face communication to be effective yet this is underpinned by sound systems of record keeping. The prospectus and student handbook provide an insight into the ethos and structure of the college and the facilities it offers. Additional information is available on the school website.

There are systems in place to monitor the safety and welfare of the pupils, particularly in relation to discipline, complaints and accidents. There are varied formats of written risk assessments, some more robust than others. These documents are subject to review; however there is little evidence of any matters identified requiring action. Some risk assessments have not thoroughly ensured all aspects of risk management have been identified and arising risks minimised.

The staff handbooks provide clear guidance on expectations alongside the school's policies and procedures. Boarding staff receive regular training in safeguarding matters, first aid and fire safety. The boarding staff are relatively new to Padworth College and they are working well together and enhancing the boarding experience for students. New staff report that they have received a suitable induction to their role and feel supported by the senior management team.

Boarders respond well to the structure and enjoy their boarding experience at Padworth College. There is a relaxed atmosphere where there is no uniform and all members of the college community are addressed by their first name. There are suitable levels of supervision, staffing is sufficient in number for the boarders' needs and boarders know where to locate an adult during the night if required.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Padworth College has an all embracing approach to diversity and has created an international community with students from 19 different countries. The integration of students from so many nationalities is impressive. Diversity is celebrated through college events, an extensive range of food, outings and a diverse curriculum.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Compliance with national minimum standards**

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure that written parental permission has been obtained in advance for the administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescription medication to boarders, and to seek medical, dental or optical treatment when required (NMS 15.14)
- ensure the school has a policy, reasonably implemented in practice, to protect boarders from potential harm deriving from their use of the internet, mobile

telephones and other electronic and digital technology or systems. In particular, amend the 'acceptable use' policy to include use of hardware that permits remote access to the internet outside the parameters of the college network (NMS 2A.1)

- ensure that the school complies with any recommendations made by the Fire Service. In particular, ensure that fire doors are not restricted from closing (NMS 26.1)
- ensure that site security is regularly reviewed (NMS 41)
- ensure that all boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, suitably furnished, accessible to any boarders with disabilities and adequately maintained (NMS 40.1)
- ensure that a senior member of the school's staff regularly monitors the school's records of risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents, to identify any issues requiring action. In particular, ensure there is a robust system of monitoring all risk assessments. (NMS 23.1)