

# Loughborough Grammar School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Martha Nethaway
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<b>Head/ Principal</b>	Paul Bernard Fisher
<b>Nominated person</b>	Paul Bernard Fisher
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	28/01/2008

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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

Loughborough Grammar School was originally founded in 1495 but moved to its present site in 1850. The Grammar School is part of a larger complex known as the Loughborough Endowed Schools with a total student population of 2100. Situated in the grounds are Loughborough High School for Girls and Fairfield Preparatory School, a co-educational prep school which prepares boys and girls for the senior schools. Each school is independent but all share a common board of governors and centralised bursary and human resources. All schools share the extensive range of on-site educational facilities and sports grounds on the periphery of the town. The school is inclusive in its attitude and intake, accepting students of all denominations and religious traditions despite having an underpinning Christian ethos.

Loughborough Grammar School view education in both a traditional and wider sense of academic, social, spiritual and physical development. Boarding is provided by the school for up to 54 students across two boarding houses. School House, part of the original school building, houses the senior boarders while younger boarders live in a separate detached building called Denton House. Both boarding houses provide students with a close knit community with an emphasis on providing a supportive, homely ethos. The majority of boarding is offered as full boarding, providing opportunities for students who, by virtue of distance from their homes, would not be able to attend the school on a daily basis. The school accommodates many overseas students and provides some flexible boarding where students go home for the weekend.

### Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an announced inspection undertaken by one Ofsted inspector. This inspection looked at the boarding school national minimum standards under the Every Child Matters outcome groups.

The overall quality of boarding is good. Boarding is thriving and the school provides good opportunities both inside and outside the classroom for boarders. Boarders enjoy using the extensive resources and doing worthwhile activities. Staff are committed to the development and care of the boarders that they look after. This helps boarders to develop their confidence and independence.

As a result of this inspection visit, five recommendations have been set. Two of these relate to reviewing the school policies connected to medication and complaints which arise as a result of the changes made to national minimum standards. It has also been recommended that the school further engages boarders to resolve issues related to the quantity, quality and choice of the evening meals; to make

improvements to the boarding houses including dormitories and living areas so that they are suitably furnished and adequately maintained to meet the needs of boarders; and to increase opportunities for boarding staff to continue their professional training and knowledge related to meeting the needs of international boarders.

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

The school has completed all of the recommendations made at the last inspection in January 2008.

The school was recommended to review the child protection and safeguarding policy which has now been completed and is also reviewed annually. The school has reviewed its operation of the fire detection system in the boarding areas and staff are now competent to manage this effectively. Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new chaplain and the chapel environment changes reflect the needs of international boarders. The boarding accommodation is fully hard wired for computer access which is very reliable. The school provides clear information to parents and boarders about the school's boarding principles which are informative, relevant and helpful.

All of these improvements demonstrate the school's continued commitment to meeting and promoting the welfare of boarders at all times.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders' health is promoted well. Personal, social and health education is delivered through the school curriculum which takes place weekly. The development of boarders' social skills includes opportunities in pastoral care, assemblies and extra curriculum activities which contribute effectively to boarders' personal development. As a result, it helps to increase boarders' self-awareness and confidence.

Boarders receive good first aid and prompt health care as necessary. Boarders have access to the school medical centre which is staffed by two part-time nurses. There is also a visiting doctor who holds a weekly surgery to deal with any health matters. There are effective arrangements in place for boarders when they are unwell. The school has a full range of healthcare policies but has yet to develop a policy related to boarders keeping and administering their own medication

The school has a dedicated catering team who are responsible for the organisation and preparation of meals. All boarders take their meals in a central dining hall. The school regularly updates menus and introduces new dishes. A recent development has been providing brunch on Saturdays. Boarders have three meals a day with a hot meal being served each time. Boarders enjoy their meals at breakfast and lunch. For example, at lunch there is a choice of hot meals which includes a pasta bar, baguette bar, rice and jacket potatoes bar and traditional cooked meals. The school is working

in partnership with boarders to resolve some issues around quantity, quality and choice for the evening meals. This area was a clear theme in the returned questionnaires from boarders.

Boarders are able to prepare simple straightforward snacks in the boarding houses. There is a regular supply of fresh fruit and ample water fountains around the school campus. Boarders are also able to bring their own tuck boxes for snacks.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders' welfare is well promoted. The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of boarders and staff share this commitment. Staff receive appropriate induction and training so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident about carrying them out. Boarders receive a good all-round education and boarding in a stable, caring and safe environment.

Boarders understand and benefit from a well-organised and disciplined school in which the occurrence of bullying is minimised. Boarders understand that bullying is wrong and is not tolerated by the school. Staff are skilful at using opportunities during tutor time and assemblies to discuss aspects of friendships and bullying. Prominence is given to providing an environment where bullying, harassment or discrimination is not tolerated.

The school promotes a culture that is open and welcoming. The school has a complaints policy in place that ensures that complaints are managed efficiently and at an appropriate level. The school policy does not clearly explain that boarders and parents have the right to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer regarding any complaint concerning their welfare. This is a minor oversight of the school and the school is taking action to correct it.

Boarders are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour. Boarders observe the school's code of conduct well and regularly receive rewards. One staff member commented, 'High expectations and a culture of praise are central to the success of our boarders.'

Boarders are protected from the risk of fire. Boarders learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they have regular opportunities to practice the evacuation of the boarding houses. The health and safety officer regularly monitors fire safety procedures including their enactment by boarders and staff. This is borne out by the level of comprehensive documentation and records kept at the school.

Boarders are provided with an environment that provides good physical safety. The school employs a range of staff to manage the school estate effectively. The boarding houses are free from public intrusion. The potential risk from the public right of way is well managed. Boarders are protected from unnecessary hazards

because the school has a well organised risk management approach. This is underpinned by good-quality documented risk assessments and staff training. Boarders' activities and out of school visits are well organised to ensure a safe event. There are effective structures laid out to assess risks before and during these any organised events.

The school has an effective recruitment and appointment procedure. Staff working in the boarding houses are suitable to be working with children.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders receive good personal support from staff. Boarders are helped to develop to their maximum potential. This support is delivered from a range of pastoral staff which includes boarding staff, nursing staff, a chaplain and a range of tutorial support staff. The needs of each and every boarder from all backgrounds and nationalities are upmost in the minds of all the pastoral staff associated with the boarders' development across the school. It is clear that boarders are valued and can, through a range of social contact, academic support and pastoral guidance, be helped to achieve their aspirations.

Boarders who require additional support for whom English is an additional language are given extra support and tuition. Boarders practise their English through using it frequently. Boarding staff encourage boarders to speak English during meal times where possible. One boarder commented, 'As I have moved through the school my English has really improved.' In addition, the school also provides a learning support department which provides a caring environment for pupils to achieve their potential both in and out of the classroom.

The school welcomes boarders from all faiths and makes provision for their spiritual welfare. Boarders of all faiths celebrate special days and honour their religious obligations. Chapel services are distinctive and instil broad moral values which principally relate to consideration for the welfare of others. Boarders attend chapel service midweek and also invite the chaplain to their evening meal.

The school encourages boarders to take a full and active part in activities outside school times. Activities reflect the enthusiasm and interest of boarders. For example, boarders regularly participate in football, cricket, rugby, tennis, gym workouts, basketball, squash and tennis. Boarders are also provided with indoor activities in their common rooms such as snooker, table tennis and a range of console games. Weekends can be a busy time for boarders and there is a mixture of organised activities and time for boarders just to relax.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Securing boarders' views is a well-embedded practice in the school. The school council receives full and active support from staff. Each day boarders attend a house meeting where staff share information about a variety of topics and boarders are encouraged to share their views and give feedback. In addition there is a house assembly once a week and this is an opportunity for pupils to contribute their individual talents to the house system. The school has a prefect system and this provides strong and positive examples of role models to younger members of the school.

Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families. It is routine for the boarders to have access to mobile phones. The boarding houses are all networked to the school computer system enabling the boarders to access work areas, use email to keep in touch with their family and to obtain supervised access to the internet. Boarders are encouraged to keep in touch regularly with their parents and families.

Boarders are helped to settle in by the boarding staff, prefects and other boarders. Boarders at all times have a detailed tour of the boarding house so that they can become familiar with their new environment. There is always a brief meeting where everybody introduces themselves. If new boarders face problems, they know and understand that they can talk to the boarding staff and prefects. Every effort is made to support boarders to settle into their new environment.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarders' money and possessions are protected by the school. The school has a system in place for pocket money and there are clear times when boarders can access this. As boarders progress through the school and become more independent they are encouraged to have bank accounts. As a result, boarders become more aware of their income and expenditure and develop budget management skills.

The boarding accommodation is close to the main school campus. There are two separate boarding houses 'Denton House' for juniors and 'School House' for seniors. Larger rooms are shared, lower sixth formers occupy twin rooms and members of the upper sixth enjoy a room to themselves. Each house has its own kitchen where boarders can make snacks and drinks for themselves. Overall the standards in the accommodation vary, but staff have made good attempts to make it homely. For example areas in School House are tired and run down. One boarder summed this up, 'I think some of the areas of School House are quite outdated. The inside can look a bit shabby.' In the questionnaires returned by boarders some boarders felt that the boarding accommodation does not provide them with enough privacy. The school has already identified, through their development plan, new work schemes to



develop and improve the boarding environment. Toilet and washing facilities are adequate and clean throughout the houses but in some areas are rather basic. The shower facilities evident in all the boarding accommodation are adequate.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The organisation and management of the school is good. The headteacher sets the pace, leading and motivating staff and boarders alike. Boarding is viewed as a positive and beneficial feature to the school environment and provides a vibrant aspect of the school. The school has a strong family atmosphere throughout boarding, catering effectively for boarders' welfare. One parent commented, 'The staff have always been very supportive and helpful in enabling our son to have a very positive experience both in terms of schooling and being able to have a full social life at the school. Our son thoroughly enjoys his time at school.' A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is available to parents, boarders and staff. All the information provided is user-friendly, including photographic content and text. Some of the material is translated into different languages.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The school is committed and there is a good focus on meeting the needs of international boarders which are well coordinated.

The school's organisation of boarding contributes positively to boarders' welfare. Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice. Boarding staff are pivotal around all aspects of boarders' achievement. The boarding staff have specific designated roles in terms of areas of responsibility and are in charge of every detail of running the boarding houses. The headteacher commented: 'The boarding houses have benefited over the years from the stable environment with respect to the boarding staff. There are minimal levels of change with boarding staff.' Boarding staff are successful in their roles because they work cohesively as a team of people.

Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training. There is a good focus on staff training related to mandatory training. Boarding staff have opportunities to attend further training such as boarding conferences. Additional training to build on the knowledge of meeting the specific needs of international students would be beneficial for staff because pupils are present in larger numbers.

Boarders' welfare is promoted because the monitoring systems are implemented effectively. The school management team have a clear overview of key records relating to risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents. These methods ensure that boarders are cared for in a consistent and safe manner.

## **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...

- continue to engage boarders in the resolution of issues related to the quantity, quality and choice for the evening meal (NMS 24.1)
- ensure boarders keeping and administering their own medication are assessed by medical staff as sufficiently responsible to do so, and are able to store their medication safely and appropriately in accordance with the school's policy (NMS 15.11)
- ensure that boarders and their parents are informed by the school of how they can contact the Local Authority Designated Officer regarding any complaint concerning their welfare (NMS 5.4)
- ensure that boarding houses (including dormitories and living areas) and other accommodation provided for boarders are suitably furnished and adequately maintained (NMS 40.1)
- provide opportunities for training and updating in boarding practice for all staff, including new and experienced staff, commensurate with the roles, experience, and rate of turnover of staff, and any changes or planned changes or developments in boarding at the school. (NMS 34.7)