

# Lancing College

Inspection report for Boarding School

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<b>Inspection date</b>	11-Nov-2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Kevin Whatley / Liz Driver
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Setting address</b>	Lancing College, LANCING, West Sussex, BN15 0RW
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<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 452213
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Lancing College Ltd
<b>Head/Principal</b>	Jonathan W J Gillespie
<b>Nominated person</b>	Jonathan W J Gillespie
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	28-Nov-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

Lancing College is an independent school that was founded in 1848 by the Reverend Nathaniel Woodard. The school is part of the Woodard Corporation which consists of 39 schools with Lancing College being the senior school. The school has a strong Christian ethos being founded in the Anglican tradition. The school is situated on a beautiful and panoramic site dating back some 150 years and includes the iconic chapel which was started in 1868.

Lancing College offers education and boarding for students from the age of 13 to 18 years. The school has seven boarding houses. Three houses are girls' boarding accommodation and the other four are boys' boarding accommodation.

The school website states the college aims 'to provide a safe, welcoming, supportive and tolerant environment in which each pupil feels valued as an individual and, in turn, learns the importance of tolerance and consideration towards others.'

There are currently in excess of 330 boarders being accommodated by the school. A large majority of boarders participated in the inspection either by completing questionnaires, talking with the inspectors in interview groups or by assisting them with tours around the school.

## Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

The inspection was announced and took place over the course of three days. Three inspectors undertook the inspection including a Boarding Schools Additional Inspector. Two recommendations were made as a result of this inspection. The outcome of the inspection was assessed as being outstanding. The school continues to place the health care needs of boarders in high regard with excellent medical and emotional support available 24 hours a day. Meal provision is plentiful and varied with the school seeking to improve standards wherever possible. Issues were raised by boarders in regards to catering standards although the school are mindful of their views and wishes. The school encourages a culture of safety with outstanding safeguarding procedures, protocols and practices in evidence. Child protection training is provided to all staff and older boarders with specific duties. Boarders and staff alike are kept as safe as possible with health and safety matters being addressed in a robust and progressive manner. The individual needs of boarders are seen as paramount with excellent pastoral care supporting each boarder to develop and achieve their potential. Boarders feel they are listened to with the culture of boarding promoting individual choice alongside an ethos of living together with respect and mutual understanding. Boarding accommodation is good with a number of improvements made since the last inspection; the school's development plan will continue to address areas needing attention. Although some understandable signs of wear are evident, all the houses were found to harbour a homely and relaxed atmosphere. The management of boarding is outstanding with staff being suitably guided to provide excellent standards of support, encouragement and care. Boarding

at Lancing College is an extremely important aspect of life at the school and is obviously engrained in its core values and ethos.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Five recommendations were made at the previous inspection. A recommendation was made in relation to the need to improve facilities within the medical centre. Since the last inspection the medical centre has been refurbished to a very good standard. Two recommendations were made in respect of addressing meal and snack provision both within individual boarding houses and the main dining hall. It is fair to say a large number of boarders continue to express strong views on the standard of food and meal provision on offer. However the school has taken considerable steps to listen to their views, including responding to the practicalities of meal time routines to allow for less congestion at peak times and addressing menu choice and variety. One recommendation focused on pursuing the school's development plan to introduce a sixth form common room. A sixth form common room has now been established which offers sixth form boarders a pleasant and useful space that has been received extremely positively. The final recommendation focused on the need to implement a system of formal appraisals for the matrons. Since the last inspection an appropriate process has been introduced and is seen as a positive move by those concerned.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders receive an outstanding standard of health care provision. The school has appropriate policies on countering major risks to health such as alcohol, smoking and substance misuse. Clear consequences are in place for anyone caught smoking or drinking about which all boarders are very well informed. There is an excellent personal, social and health education policy which is age appropriate and includes visiting professionals. A wealth of information is easily accessible in the medical centre. As a result of these policies and practices there are extremely few incidences of alcohol misuse or smoking recorded.

The emotional needs of boarders are fully considered with specific support on offer. A counsellor is available within school two afternoons per week and boarders can easily access such support whenever they feel the need.

Boarders receive first aid and health care from experienced and trained staff. A high number of the school's staff are trained in first aid. The medical centre staff are qualified nurses with a wealth of experience in practice nursing offering a high quality service. The medical centre has been upgraded since the last inspection and provides a much improved environment. Boarders can access nurses 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All current nurses are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. The school has very close links with a local general practitioner surgery with regular visits made to the school by doctors. Boarders can access both male and female doctors.

Procedures for the administration of medicines are very robust with excellent records kept for each individual boarder. Written parental permission is sought for numerous aspects of health including the administration of first aid and non prescribed medicines. All information regarding a boarder's health is shared on a need to know basis with confidentiality being a main focus.

Overall boarders receive a very good standard of catering provision. Meal quantity and choice is excellent, although some boarders felt that quality was lacking at times. Meals are nutritious and balanced with excellent choices including salads, pasta, home made soups, jacket potatoes and a vegetarian alternative at every meal in addition to the daily menu. The catering department and senior management team are pro active in listening to boarders and use their suggestions, via the food committee, for development and improvement. The recent opening of the school café, at periods outside of main mealtimes, gives boarders the opportunity to purchase hot snacks such as slices of pizza, Paninis and burgers. The catering department holds a five star environmental health inspection award; this being the highest award to be gained.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school ethos is based firmly on the idea of mutual respect and understanding which is clearly echoed within the boarding environment. Boarders stated categorically that there are no issues or concerns relating to them being bullied or intimidated. The school operates a zero tolerance approach towards bullying which includes addressing up to date issues such as cyber bullying. Staff are very much in tune with boarders' attitudes and beliefs which, coupled with good levels of staff supervision, suggests any problems would be identified quickly.

Expectations of behaviour and attitude are high with boarders stating the rules are fair. The levels of sanctions given to boarders are minimal with an emphasis on rewarding good work, attitude and progress. When sanctions are given they are done so in line with agreed school punishments which are clearly known by all. The few sanctions given were seen to be appropriate and accepted by those boarders in question. Punishments are clearly recorded and monitored by the Second Master. Behaviour observed across the inspection was seen to be exemplary.

An appropriate system is in place to address the complaints or concerns of boarders. Very few complaints or concerns had been made and none were of a significant nature. Details of the school's complaints procedure along with contact details for independent advocacy services such as Childline are found within the boarders' guide and displayed in communal areas.

Boarders, day pupils and staff live and work in an environment where a culture of safety is evident. An excellent cross-school approach towards keeping boarders safe from the risks of harm is well established in both policy and practice. An extremely experienced member of the senior staff team maintains overall responsibility for child protection, being pro-active in determining and implementing the most effective and robust safeguarding strategies. All policies and procedures are completed in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board protocols. School staff are provided with child protection awareness training as soon as possible including gap students. Peer supporters and prefects are also given clear guidance as to what actions to take in the event that they have concerns. Staff displayed a sound understanding of key safeguarding matters. Boarders said they felt 'very safe' at the school and none raised concerns.

Health and safety matters are addressed robustly thus ensuring all persons at the school are kept as safe as possible. Records confirmed the regular testing and servicing of fire alarms, emergency lighting and fire fighting equipment. Routine fire evacuations are carried out,

including during the night or early morning, with all new boarders being given clear fire safety instructions as soon as they arrive. The routine testing and servicing of gas, electrical and water appliances ensures they are in a good and safe working condition. The boarding environment was found to be free from hazards. When boarders engage in activities, events or trips both at the school and away from it, suitable risk assessments are completed.

Boarders felt staff respected their privacy at all times, while members of staff confirmed an appropriate approach is in place which balances the need to supervise boarders while allowing them sufficient private time and space.

A robust recruitment process is in place to ensure no members of staff, or those living at the school, work directly with, or have access to, boarders without first being thoroughly vetted.

The unique school environment, with public access to the Chapel, creates a number of potential challenges. However the school addresses the situation in a sound and purposeful manner with support staff wearing identification badges and most doors to the school buildings being equipped with key pad entry systems; all boarding houses have such secure entry systems in place. CCTV covers the main entrance and five other areas around the site. Staff are very mindful of challenging unknown visitors if ever they were found within the school grounds; very few incidents have occurred in previous years and none have been serious.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders receive outstanding levels of personal support and guidance. All members of staff recognise their contribution to the welfare and development of boarders. Boarders noted an extensive group of support networks are available including education, pastoral, and domestic staff and indeed their peers. Excellent communication systems exist to ensure there is a 'joined up' approach to any difficulty. The second deputy and assistant head (pastoral) lead on pastoral matters supported well by the nurses in the health centre, the counsellor and the chaplain. Senior pupils are given areas of responsibility: prefects and peer supporters are conduits for younger boarders and are suitably trained for their roles. The school has developed good links with external agencies when specific issues need to be referred for specialist support. At the heart of the school is a belief in collaboration with all agencies, and the partnership with parents ensures that pastoral care is outstanding. Problems are swiftly and sympathetically detected and staff work tirelessly for a resolution.

Lancing College provides an outstanding range of activities and opportunities for boarders to develop their skills. Service and participation are embedded in the culture and philosophy of the school in keeping with the Woodard Foundation. Alongside the need to be competitive and focused is the idea of participation and enjoyment with considerable efforts made to include as many boarders as possible. School facilities are very good with imaginative redevelopment of buildings e.g. theatre from swimming pool with the school continuing to pursue ambitious plans to develop both boarding and other facilities to enhance the opportunities of all pupils. The grounds are extensive and include a boarders' farm, excellent sports fields and the Reeve Art School .

The school values the diverse needs of its community and demonstrates a commitment to equal opportunities. Boarders from overseas report that the school encourages them to

integrate fully while acknowledging and respecting their cultural identity. All areas of the curriculum and recreational activities are accessible to all regardless of gender; day pupils are integrated into the boarding houses and enabled to stay overnight if taking part in school activities.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are provided with excellent opportunities to contribute their views and opinions. This includes year group forums and the food committee; ideas brought forward have subsequently led to the development of the new cafe and sixth form common room. The school has also responded to requests from boarders to address weekend activity planning by forming a weekend committee..

Even more significant is the commitment to charities which dominates the Lent term. From modest roots, each house now has to propose and organise activities for one week for charities of their own choosing. One third of the whole sum raised goes to school based projects in Malawi – and this project has been running for more than twenty years, an excellent example of the philosophy of service to others.

Strong relationships between staff and boarders provide a culture of discussion where matters can be easily discussed informally and resolved. All boarders are permitted to have mobile phones and only the youngest boarders have to hand them in. The value of information technology is well understood in the school where a philosophy of education and monitoring, rather than restriction, enables all pupils to make maximum use of it in work, research and communication with their friends and family. Communication with parents is extremely good with no parent expressing concerns regarding liaison between the school and themselves and vice versa. The school is due to hold information/training events for parents to allow them the opportunity to receive up to date guidance on the safest use of information technology.

New boarders receive excellent support on arrival. Induction programmes are implemented to assist boarders' transition from one school to another and from different stages in the school with specialist advice on subject choices and careers advice. Efforts are made to meet parents overseas and regular newsletters and communications keep them in touch with events at school. The extensive programme of activities on offer keeps the boarders busy to combat feelings of homesickness when they first arrive and gives them opportunities to develop new interests and skills. There is excellent and improving access to technology to enable easier contact with families outside the United Kingdom.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The school ensures boarders have their belongings protected. No boarder raised concerns that their possessions were not adequately respected or kept safe. All boarders have keys to their rooms and in addition are provided with lockable storage facilities within their dorms. The school ethos encourages trust and respect with a clear expectation on valuing the possessions of others.

Boarders benefit from living in a unique environment which is well maintained, comfortable,



clean and homely. Younger boarders share dorms, though never any more than six, with rooms offering a reasonable amount of space. Older boarders share double rooms and in the lower and upper sixth form are provided with their own rooms. An adequate amount of bathrooms and showers are available. Communal areas offer a good standard of facilities with modern entertainment equipment such as TVs, DVDs and computers. The décor of the environment is generally good with a number of houses having been re-decorated and improved since the last inspection. A few aspects of the houses are showing understandable wear and tear, although the on-going development programme is continuing to improve the standard of accommodation.

Boarders have access to many of the school's facilities after the school day has ended including the library, computer rooms and sports hall. The beautiful school grounds encompass hard courts, football, rugby and hockey pitches all set amidst the backdrop of the school and iconic chapel.

## Organisation

The provision is outstanding.

Clear and detailed information is made readily available regarding the school which incorporates all aspects of boarding provision. A well presented prospectus clearly outlines the school ethos and what boarders and parents can expect. The school's website offers considerable information with links to the last Ofsted inspection report. Boarders are provided with a useful guide which contains all necessary information.

The running and management of boarding within the school is carried out in an excellent fashion. The provision of boarding is facilitated through a robust management structure with the head of school playing an active and supportive role in ensuring boarding is key to the culture of the whole school. The Assistant Head (Pastoral) is hugely experienced and clearly dedicated to meeting the needs of all the boarders in his care. It is clear his commitment, drive, enthusiasm and leadership ensures boarders receive a consistently high level of care, supervision and guidance. Similarly the senior management team is comprised of staff with boarding experience which is evident in the high profile being afforded to boarding.

The school ethos fully embraces boarding, which is seen as a vital and vibrant element of the school. Without exception boarders and many parents felt the management of boarding was carried out extremely well. For instance comments such as 'pastoral care is excellent', 'they take very good care of my son', 'my daughter loves boarding there' and 'it feels like home' were indicative of the responses received.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The different cultures, backgrounds and nationalities of boarders living in the school are clearly celebrated and enjoyed. Boarders come from many parts of the world thus creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere where mutual appreciation is engrained in everyday living. Boarders view living together as an opportunity to learn about each other and clearly see cultural diversity as a positive and enhancing experience. Each boarder's individuality is acknowledged and valued, whether this be a cultural or religious difference or an individual ability to excel in a specific area. The acknowledgement of the importance of difference and how this can enrich everyone's experience is embedded in the school.

The organisation of boarding ensures that dorms are arranged to allow for appropriate gender separation, with the girls' and boys' accommodation being situated in different

houses. Within the houses themselves a majority of boarders are allotted rooms on the same floors as their year groups. During the first few years of boarding dorm arrangements are decided by the school. This allows boarders the chance to get to know each other and not become isolated in particular living groups. Boarders who have good reason to request moving to different dorms can do so, although the culture of learning to live with each other with respect and understanding is clearly embedded in boarding life.

The school takes every precaution when considering risks to boarders both in and out of the school environment. A comprehensive process is in place whereby risk assessments are completed and reviewed regularly. All eventualities are considered with a realistic approach being appropriately risk aware rather than risk avoidant.

Boarding staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities being very well supported and guided by thorough induction and continued training programmes. The school's policies and procedures are produced with boarding in mind with an emphasis on encouraging good and safe practice focusing on individual needs and welfare. Boarders receive a good level of supervision from a dedicated and experienced boarding staff team who understand their individual needs very well. Boarders felt living at the school was 'brilliant' and like living in 'one big happy family'.

## **Compliance with national minimum standards**

The school meets all the national minimum standards.