

# Lucton School

Lucton, Leominster HR6 9PN

## Inspection dates

21 November 2018

### Overall outcome

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

Boarding provision outcome

**The school meets all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 8, 8(a), 8(b) and National Minimum Standard 11.1*

- The Department for Education (DfE) asked inspectors to determine whether suitable arrangements are in place to safeguard pupils. This is because the department was concerned that pupils might be at risk of harm from the inappropriate conduct of some staff and lack of oversight for pupils' online activity. The DfE was also concerned that pupils may not have the means of expressing worries or dissatisfaction about the school or their safety. Inspectors found these concerns to be without foundation.
- Staff place a high priority on pupils' safety, their welfare and their well-being. For this reason, there is a well-thought-out safeguarding policy and set of procedures. These reflect the most recent guidance from the Secretary of State. The policy is available on the school's website for parents to view.
- The designated safeguarding lead has ensured that all staff are well trained to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk. This training is tailored well to the different roles staff have in school. As a result, there is a high culture of vigilance towards safeguarding that is consistent across the school and the boarding provision.
- Staff act quickly when they are concerned about a pupil's welfare. The designated lead coordinates the help given and monitors the situation closely. Staff frequently discuss pupils they are worried about and make sure that pupils get the support they need.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel very safe in the school and in the boarding houses. They appreciate the efforts made to protect them.

- The school has clear rules and procedures designed to protect pupils from the dangers of online activity. Pupils understand the need for these, even though they do not always like having to follow them. Staff keep a close eye on what pupils are looking at and act swiftly if they find anything inappropriate.
- Pupils have many avenues of support and advice available to them. There is an open culture in which they are confident to talk to staff. Pupils name specific people they can turn to for help. They can contact staff via email if they prefer and can report concerns about their peers.
- Governors are increasingly knowledgeable about safeguarding. They oversee implementation of the school's policies. For example, the chair of the governing body checks that recruitment procedures are followed correctly and that information about the suitability of staff is recorded correctly on the single central record.
- The school meets the requirements for these standards.

*Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10 and National Minimum Standards 12.1, 12.2, 19*

- Inspectors were asked to ascertain whether some pupils' conduct, including bullying, posed a risk to the well-being of others. This is because some parents have expressed concern to the DfE about the way the school has dealt with incidents in the past.
- There is a positive, happy climate around the school. Pupils are polite to adults and courteous to one another. They feel a sense of belonging. One pupil expressed this by saying, 'I like it here. There is a nice atmosphere. It's like a well-made family.'
- Pupils understand the merit and demerit system. They say it works. They are proud to wear the badges that show they have received merits. Equally, pupils told inspectors that they seek to avoid receiving demerits. This means that pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well.
- Prefects take some responsibility for enforcing the school's rules. They are trained to do this appropriately and do so under the supervision of staff. Prefects check with senior staff when they issue a sanction. Senior staff monitor the sanctions given out. They check that punishments are proportionate. Staff also use this information to spot any concerning patterns in a pupil's behaviour and intervene before things get out of hand.
- Pupils do not worry about being bullied. Some low-level bullying does happen. However, when it does occur staff take it very seriously and work hard to sort the problem out. They talk to all parties involved, helping the victim to feel supported and the perpetrators to understand the error of their ways. Parents are not always convinced that the issue has been resolved. Staff are aware of this. They are seeking ways to be more successful in putting parents' minds at rest.
- The school meets the requirements for these standards.

*Paragraphs 11, 16, 16(a), 16(b) and National Minimum Standards 6.1, 6.2, 6.3*

- Inspectors were asked to check whether the school, and the boarding accommodation, provide a safe and healthy environment for pupils.
- Inspectors checked the implementation of the school's health and safety policies, including the risk assessment policy. These policies are followed meticulously. Action to reduce risk is swift and effective.

For example, the headteacher identified that some upstairs windows may have posed a potential risk because they could be opened very wide. These windows have now been replaced with safe ones that cannot be opened wide.

- The risk assessment policy stipulates how staff should identify and manage the risks in the area of the school for which they are responsible. Staff follow this routinely. Therefore, potential hazards are avoided. For example, the swimming pool is kept locked when not in use.

- The school meets the requirements for these standards.

*Paragraph 14 and National Minimum Standards 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 15.10*

- The DfE asked inspectors to check whether supervision levels are adequate to ensure that pupils are safe in the boarding houses and on school buses. This is because the department had received information that may indicate pupils are able to engage in inappropriate activities, such as drinking alcohol. Inspectors found no evidence that this could happen. Therefore, the concerns appear unfounded.
- Supervision levels are appropriate. Staff ensure that they know pupils' whereabouts at all times. Pupils are safe as they travel to and from school. For example, bus drivers are well trained to spot and report problems. If pupils misbehave on the journey to or from school, staff work hard to get to the bottom of what happened and to deal with it.
- There is adequate staff cover in the boarding house to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. Each boarding house has two, internal, residential accommodations for staff. There is always at least one member of these staff on duty. In addition, each evening there is always a member of education staff on duty. They cover 'prep' time and evening activities.
- The school currently employs four students taking gap years to supplement supervision during the day and to help cover evenings and weekends. The school ensures that these students are suitably trained to work in boarding accommodation. Leaders have recently reviewed this role and are developing it further. From Christmas, when the current students leave, the school plans to employ four graduate assistants. These will be staff who are looking to broaden their experience before moving into social care or teaching. The first cohort will work up until summer 2019. Replacements will then be recruited each academic year.
- Every weekend there are plenty of staff on duty, no matter how many children are boarding. Due to the flexi-boarding arrangements, some weekends are quieter than others. When the more-popular activities are happening, there are more boarders. On weekends such as these, additional staff from the education team are on duty along with the boarding staff.
- Pupils say the rules about such things as smoking and alcohol are absolutely clear. It is forbidden. They know that there would be sanctions for such behaviour. None can recall it ever happening.
- The school meets the requirements for these standards.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraphs 22, 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 23(2), 25, 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 30 and National Minimum Standards 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 8*

- Inspectors were asked to check the condition of the boarding houses. This is because the DfE had received complaints about the size and cleanliness of some bedrooms and the suitability of the bathrooms.
- The school building and boarding houses are maintained to a high standard. A programme of upgrading the premises is underway. As a result, the accommodation is continuously being improved.
- The full-time maintenance team is on hand 24-hours-a-day to fix any problems. This was seen happening during the inspection.
- Bedrooms are comfortable, clean and well looked after. Some are small but have everything in them that is needed. Leaders are taking steps to provide more space for pupils who sleep in these rooms. For example, the maintenance team is building study beds that incorporate a desk to save on floor space. Rooms in the newer boarding house are more spacious. A long-term plan is in place to build a third boarding house to a high specification. When that is in use, leaders plan to improve the room layout of the oldest accommodation.
- Bathrooms are suitable in number and fit for purpose. Shower rooms in the older boarding house are being refurbished. Those that have been completed are finished to a high standard. The remaining shower rooms are clean, if dated. The refurbishment of all the shower rooms in the older boarding house is scheduled for completion by Easter 2019.
- Boarding houses include comfortable, welcoming common areas that enable boarders to relax, socialise or watch television. They are warm, well-lit and suitably furnished.
- Kitchen areas are also available in which pupils can prepare and eat snacks if they wish. However, boarders are expected to eat their main meals in the school dining room. In that way, staff maintain an oversight of pupils' eating habits and ensure that they eat a balanced diet.
- Food provided in the dining room is of good quality. On the whole, pupils like it. They do sometimes find fault. When this happens, they report their concerns directly to kitchen staff, who record it in the food log or pass on their thoughts to staff via the school and boarding councils. They say that the food has improved because of this communication, although there is always more that could be done.
- The school meets the requirements for these standards.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c), 34(2) and National Minimum Standards 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5, 13.6, 13.7, 13.8, 13.9*

- Leaders are proactive in ensuring that the school meets the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Following an inspection last year, in which some standards were judged to be unmet, leaders critiqued their work honestly. Where they found room for improvement they took the necessary remedial action. As a result, leaders demonstrate secure knowledge of the standards. All standards checked at this inspection are met. No weaknesses were found.

- Leaders vigilantly ensure that they carry out their duty to protect pupils and promote their welfare. As a result, the school is a safe, happy place. Pupils are well looked after by day and in the boarding accommodation.

#### Boarding provision

##### Additional national minimum standards that were assessed during this inspection

- No additional national minimum standards were assessed during this inspection.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools**

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	117045
Social care unique reference number	SC043277
DfE registration number	884/6007
Inspection number	10082566

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	0–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	336
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	51
Number of boarders on roll	78
Proprietor	Lucton Pierrepoint School Educational Trust
Chair	Dr Tony Paterson
Headteacher	Mrs Gill Thorne
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,050 to £13,725
Annual fees (boarders)	£22,500 to £31,875
Telephone number	01568 782000
Website	<a href="https://www.luctonschool.org">https://www.luctonschool.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@luctonschool.org">enquiries@luctonschool.org</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	19–22 March 2013

### **Information about this school**

- Lucton School is a co-educational day and boarding school in rural Herefordshire.
- The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors.
- It has a Nursery for children aged zero to four years, a pre-prep and prep school for pupils in Years 1 to 5, a middle school for pupils in Years 6 to 8, a senior school for Years 9 to 11 pupils and a sixth form.
- The school caters for pupils from across the world.
- A significant proportion of pupils come from military families.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school provides full-time and flexi boarding.
- The last full inspection of the school and boarding provision was in March 2013. It was carried out by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. The school was judged to be good with some elements of its work judged to be excellent.



## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out because the DfE had received information that gave rise to concerns about pupils' safety and welfare and the quality of leadership and management of the school, including that of the boarding provision. The department commissioned Ofsted to inspect the school because of these concerns.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other school staff, boarding staff and the chair of the governing body. They spoke informally to pupils as they ate their lunch.
- Inspectors toured the school premises and the boarding houses, accompanied by the headteacher and the head of boarding.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including records relating to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.

## Inspection team

Sandy Hayes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dawn Bennett

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Louise Battersby

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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