

# Lavant House School

Inspection report for boarding school

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC014603
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 June 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Gaynor Moorey
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Address</b>	West Lavant CHICHESTER West Sussex PO18 9AB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01243 527211
<b>Email</b>	office@lavanthouse.org.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Lavant House School
<b>Head of care</b>	Marian Scott
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Marian Scott
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	12 January 2004

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

## 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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## 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**

Lavant House School is an independent day and boarding school for girls aged between four to 18 years of age. The prospectus states that the school is based on Christian principles and aims to assist pupils to achieve academic success whilst acquiring confidence and self esteem. The school is set in 14 acres of parkland and is situated approximately three miles from Chichester. A majority of the pupils who use the boarding facilities are weekly or flexi-boarders. The school does have some overseas boarders who can vary the time spent boarding. A small number of boarders stay at the school over the weekends.

### **Summary**

This announced key inspection took place over two week days. The purpose of the inspection was to undertake a full review encompassing all the key National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. The school provides an excellent standard of boarding welfare which is provided by the Headmistress and the experienced house staff. The school tries to ensure the safety of the pupils. This is maintained by comprehensive and clear guidance, policies and procedures. The school provides the pupils with emotional support and encourages the pupils with their education and interests. The school ensures that information is in place to record the day to day lives of the boarding houses. The boarders enjoy contact with family and friends and are given opportunities to express their opinions and make choices about their lives. The school is maintained to a good level providing a homely environment for the boarders to live in. The house staff and gap students are supported by the Headmistress and Senior Houseparent and comprehensive systems that include supervision and training and the overall monitoring of the school. During the inspection the school received three recommendations.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

No recommendations were made at the last inspection conducted in January 2004.

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

The provision is good.

The school has an appropriate policy on countering major risks to health, including substance abuse. The school policy covers all aspects of medical care, illness, treatment, first aid, emergency treatment and emergency plan in case of a pandemic. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is provided. Each of the boarders are taught PSHE in school. The boarders are also able to discuss and gain information related to this subject with house staff, medical staff, and older pupils at the school. All of the boarders undertook a questionnaire and they identified people/staff within the school they would talk to about any issues they may have. One young person said 'if it had not been for the school I would not have made it through the last two years of school'. All of the girls seen, and those who filled in a questionnaire, identified the school as supportive and said the staff were kind, caring and always ready to help. Staff are aware of the school policy on appropriate responses to health and social issues and follow the policy in practice. Staff receive a varied plan of training including, health and safety related issues, first aid and guidance on medication. The school ensure that the boarders' medical needs are met by the nurse, matron and trained staff. There is a dedicated room for the

treatment of medical and first aid issues. The overseeing of the medical treatment undertaken in the school is by a registered nurse. A matron also shares this role but does not have an updated nurses registration or a four day first aid qualification. The school has up to date records of all medication given at the school both prescribed and non-prescribed. The school has consent in place for the administration of medication but not for first aid and emergency medical treatment. The boarders identified that they were always cared for at the school. Meals at the school were seen to be well-balanced and delivering a healthy diet. The school provide breakfast which is always inclusive of fruit. The chef then prepares a meal at lunchtime and dinnertime both of which are substantial and cover the boarders receiving their recommended five a day. Cultural and dietary needs are met and the chef has a list within the kitchen of allergies and diet needs each pupil may have. At each meal there is a hot or cold option and a vegetarian choice. Lunch time a pudding is provided alongside the fruit. The boarders have had guidance on healthy living and clearly understood about ensuring that you eat five a day (fruit and vegetables). Some young people also talked about the mixture of carbohydrates and proteins. Meals are served efficiently and without long queue times. Mealtimes are well-run social occasions with the pupils sitting where they want to with their friends. The boarders in the majority said they liked and enjoyed the food at the school and could make suggestions to the chef. Clear health and safety rules and guidance is followed within the kitchen. Staff receive training in regard to food hygiene. The school received an outstanding report from the environmental health agency.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school have developed systems, policies and procedures and guidance in order to ensure that where possible the boarders are safe and secure. Bullying in the school is reported as non-existent by the boarders and they report that any problems are dealt with by the house staff in a fair and supportive manner. The school has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and guidance is provided to staff and the boarders. Child protection at the school is led by the deputy head who has in place a clear policy for child protection incidents which is in line with local authority guidelines. The deputy head liaises with the local authority designated officer for child protection in schools, who also provides the child protection training at the school. Child protection incidents are recorded in separate files and records give clear accounts of the process used to record how the incident has been investigated through the school and other agencies where necessary. The boarders said they feel safe at the school and would always have someone to speak to. The school has a policy in place to deal with any boarders or pupils going missing from the school without permission. The school does have registration for the boarders to ensure they are on the school premises and gives a small amount of guidance on absence of leaving and returning late. Some guidance also talks about ensuring that senior boarders sign in and out. The school has a policy in place for behaviour, discipline and use of punishments. Clear instruction is given within the policy as to who can give punishments and what sanctions can be used. This policy also includes any use of physical contact and is available to staff through their handbook, parents and boarders through the prospectus and boarding handbooks. Disciplinary practice was seen to be in line with this policy. Records of sanctions used are recorded in the day book and are appropriate to the procedure. Standards of boarder behaviour are generally good and the boarders identified the school's use of punishments were generally fair. Within the questionnaires and discussion groups the boarders identified that punishments were fair, although sometimes not liked, and that staff treated everyone equally. The boarders confirmed that they feel safe and secure at the school and would talk to someone

if they had problems or homesickness. The school has a written record of serious complaints and the outcome of which is monitored by the senior management team. The Headmistress keeps all records of issues effecting the school. However, the school have not received a serious complaint since the last inspection in 2003. The boarders said they would be happy to talk to the staff about any issues and felt staff always treated them fairly. The school enables the boarders and staff to be aware of the emergency evacuation procedures from the boarding accommodation. The school ensures boarders are aware of the fire exits. Boarders were clearly aware of the fire evacuation procedures which are displayed in the boarding houses and records showed regular drills were undertaken. The staff are given fire safety training including the gap students. The school has a designated fire person which is the bursar, who ensures records of checking equipment and fire drills happen and are in place. Staff supervise the boarders in a non-intrusive manner and although they are available to boarders this is not at the cost of their privacy. The boarders confirmed that the staff respect their privacy when they are bathing or changing. Shower rooms and toilets are able to offer the boarders privacy. All staff including the gap staff at the school undergo a rigorous recruitment process including safety checks including CRB checks. The school have created a spread sheet which catalogues the checks that have been undertaken on each member of staff and governors. The family members outside of employment at the school hold a CRB check; these records were also contained within the up to date spread sheet. The school does not allow staff to work or have contact with the boarders unless they have had and completed all safety checks. There are no people living at the school who do not work or have a role within the day to day running of the boarding houses. The taxi firm used have been checked by the school. The school and boarding house has good security systems in place including key pad locks on the outside doors. CCTV is used at the school, however, it does not intrude upon the pupils. In addition to external cameras on the outside of the building, there are two internal cameras, one overlooking the main entrance hall and the other overlooking the side entrance to the house. A risk assessment is in place for the use of the cameras. The boundaries of the school are clearly marked and the boarders are aware of the boundaries of the school grounds. The boarders are aware of what they would need to do if they were to sight a stranger within the grounds. The boarders when asked if they were safe also talked about the security within the school and how they are kept safe. The school ensures that health and safety are regularly checked and the school has a health and safety committee who meet twice a year and monitor and overhaul any areas that need work or updating. Clear records are kept of the maintenance and health and safety issues, such as electrical equipment testing. The school have a security risk assessment and all external doors have key pad locks on them. All staff who drive the minibus have undertaken the minibus safety training. Risk assessments are in place for any high risk areas in and around the school. The school has risk assessments in place for all high risk activities and holidays. Medical consent is sought for the holidays and overnight trips away. However, the school do not carry consent records on trips and activities.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school has a independent visitor in place who the boarders speak to in confidence. This person has undergone safety checks. The independent visitor who is rarely used but is known to the boarders, and the number for the visitor, is displayed in the boarding house. Boarders feel they are able to speak to all members of staff within the school where appropriate. The boarders discussed at some level their feelings of being safe and cared for at the school. One young person said the staff had listened and supported them through some very difficult times.

All of the boarders in the questionnaires felt they could talk to someone at the school and would be listened to. The younger boarders talked off being able to talk to the head girl and other sixth formers. New boarders to the school have a buddy system. The school also have a counsellor that the boarders and day girls can access. The school has written guidance in line with anti discriminatory practice. The school is free of any discrimination and boarders needs are dealt with sensitively. The school has a clear policy to offer guidance to staff on equality and diversity and how to deal with anti discriminatory practice. Discriminatory practice is also part of the bullying policy. The school does try to integrate all groups with the school so no group feels in the minority. Observation during the inspection showed how all of the boarders were able to mix and there were no noticeable groups of boarders who did not mix with everyone else. The boarders from overseas who only are at the school for a short time had been very much integrated into the boarding group whether as a senior or junior. All of the boarders talked about enjoying being with the other girls and spending time in the group. All cultural and religious needs are respected and the school attempts to meet all the boarders needs in this area. Cultural and religious needs are met within the school, this could be seen through how dietary needs were dealt with and spiritual needs respected.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school makes arrangements for the boarders to have access to appropriate forums where they can make decisions and choices and voice their opinions. The meetings include a school council, weekly boarding house meetings and food meeting twice a year. The boarders through questionnaires and discussion groups were clear that staff did listen to them and consider their ideas on a one to one basis and through forums provided. There is a nominated head girl within the boarding system who the boarders are able to discuss any changes they would like to happen or trips they'd like to take. The young people are given access to contact their family and friends through the use of telephones that offer privacy in private telephone boxes that contain contact help line numbers. The boarders are able to have mobile phones but there are clear guidelines in place for their use. There is some access to e-mails and some boarders have their own lap-tops, again there is clear guidance on use and timescales as to when it is appropriate to use them. The boarders all identified that they could have contact with their families and friends. Parents are notified of any significant events that happen to their children. The school contact parents of the children and update them on progress or any issues that arise.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The boarding accommodation is suitable for the boarders. The accommodation is set on the top floors of the main house at the school and situated over three floors. The bedrooms are a mixture of singles, doubles and shared rooms. The shared rooms are generally the junior boarders and there is a spare room and some vacant beds for the flexi-boarders. The boarders are very happy with their rooms and expressed how much they enjoyed staying together. The sixth formers either have single rooms or live in the cottage. The sixth formers did say the cottage does have small rooms but that they appreciate the independence it offers. The rooms are maintained to a good standard and clean and tidy. The school have a rolling renovation programme for the boarding areas. The boarding houses provide the boarders with communal areas such as common rooms, small kitchens and the extensive beautiful large grounds. The boarders favourite place to spend time is the senior houseparent large office which is a homely

and welcoming large room. The house staff and gap students are provided with their own accommodation in the boarding house and cottage with en-suite facilities. The boarders are provided with enough toilets, bathrooms and washing facilities. The school could clearly be seen to be renovating the bathroom facilities in the boarding areas.

**Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a prospectus which contains full information regarding the school it includes guidance of the schools policies and procedures and boarding practice. All of the boarders receive an appropriate handbook which gives the boarding houses rules and routines. The school acts within its own statement and accordingly follows its policies, procedures and guidance. As a collective the senior management team have a excellent system in place to monitor documents and ensure that any problems are dealt with. The Headmistress has designed a scheme of delegation, but at all times retaining management responsibility. Those staff spoken to at the inspection and the boarders all talked of how the Headmistress was accessible and would make time to speak to them. The house staff at the school are provided with job descriptions which are also in the house staff handbook. All staff including the gap students are given a good programme of training which includes both mandatory sessions on areas such as first aid and child protection. Staff and gap students also access the British boarding school association training courses. House staff and the gap students feel supported and can access supervision on a daily basis. Yearly appraisal are undertaken by the Headmistress.

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

**Statutory requirements**

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
----------	--------	----------

**Recommendations**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the matron at the school is trained in four day first aid course. (NMS 15)
- ensure medical consent is on file for all types of treatment (NMS 15)
- ensure medical consent is taken on trips/activities away from the school ( NMS 26)

## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for boarding school

#### Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders' health is promoted (NMS 6)
- safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records (NMS 7)
- boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary (NMS 15)
- boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill (NMS 16)
- boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal problems (NMS 17)
- boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals (NMS 25)
- boarders are suitably accommodated when ill (NMS 48)
- boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered (NMS 49).

**Ofsted considers 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders are protected from bullying (NMS 2)
- boarders are protected from abuse (NMS 3)
- use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate (NMS 4)
- boarders' complaints are responded to appropriately (NMS 5)
- the operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school (NMS 22)
- boarders are protected from the risk of fire (NMS 26)
- the welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school (NMS 28)
- boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities (NMS 29)
- boarders' personal privacy is respected (NMS 37)
- there is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders (NMS 38)
- boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures; all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises are supervised (NMS 39)
- boarders have their own accommodation, which is secure from public intrusion (NMS 41)
- boarders are protected from safety hazards (NMS 47)

**Ofsted considers 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders have access to a range and choice of activities (NMS 11)
- boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination (NMS 18)
- boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands (NMS 27)
- boarders have satisfactory provision to study (NMS 43)
- boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas (NMS 46)

**Ofsted considers 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.**

**Annex A**

## **Making a positive contribution**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school (NMS 12)
- boarders receive personal support from staff (NMS 14)
- boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families (NMS 19)
- new boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in (NMS 21)
- boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school (NMS 30)
- there are sound relationships between staff and boarders (NMS 36)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **Achieving economic well-being**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders' possessions and money are protected (NMS 20)
- boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation (NMS 40)
- boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation (NMS 42)
- boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities (NMS 44)
- boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day (NMS 45)
- boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school (NMS 50)

**Ofsted considers 51 the key standard to be inspected.**

## **Organisation**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- a suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- there is clear leadership of boarding in the school (NMS 8)
- crises affecting boarders' welfare are managed effectively (NMS 9)
- the school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare (NMS 10)
- risk assessment and school record-keeping contribute to boarders' welfare (NMS 23)
- boarders are supervised adequately by staff (NMS 31)
- staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site (NMS 32)
- boarders are adequately supervised at night (NMS 33)
- boarders are looked after by staff which have specific boarding duties, and have received adequate induction and continued training (NMS 34)
- boarders are looked after by staff which follow clear boarding policies and practice (NMS 35)
- the welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 51)
- the welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

**Ofsted considers 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.**