

Lancaster Royal Grammar School

Lancaster Royal Grammar School, East Road, LANCASTER, LA1 3EF

Inspection dates	14/05/2013 to 16/05/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Outcomes for boarders	Outstanding	1
Quality of boarding provision and care	Outstanding	1
Boarders' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of boarding	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The boarding provision is outstanding because

- Boarding at the school is effectively and professionally managed by the senior management team with close oversight from school governors. This provides clear vision and values for the boarding provision, resulting in a cohesive approach to driving forward improvement. Monitoring of boarding services is robust and helps maintain the high standards and drive forward further improvements.
- The school has very good procedures for safeguarding children including a highly experienced designated safeguarding officer. Regular training for staff and prefects is provided so that all individuals fully comprehend their role. All policies and procedures are up to date allowing any concerns to be dealt with as they arise. Boarders confirm that they feel safe.
- Boarding pupils and their parents are extremely complimentary about the school. Parents comment upon the fantastic progress boarders make and confirm that there is excellent communication and consultation with boarding house staff. Each boarding house has highly motivated, skilled and competent staff members who establish excellent relationships with boarding pupils.
- Boarding pupils' healthcare needs are exceptionally well met. The school nurse ensures that boarding pupils have a secure understanding of their own health needs. The medical centre provides excellent facilities to care for boarders who are sick or injured. Arrangements for the administration and recording of medication are equally well managed.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools

Information about this inspection

The school was contacted on the morning of day one, by the lead inspector to announce the inspection. The inspection took place over three days with feedback provided on the afternoon of day three. During the inspection records and documentation were examined and interviews took place with the boarding pupils, head of care, head teacher, staff and feedback was obtained from parents. Evening activities were also observed and meals were taken with boarding pupils. There were many opportunities for boarders to pass on their views and opinions to the inspection team. Views were virtually all positive and this is reflected in survey findings.

Inspection team

Stephen Trainor	Lead social care inspector
Christine Scully	Social care inspector
Sonya Robinson	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Lancaster Royal Grammar School is a boys' educational day and boarding school situated on the city edge. It is close to a range of local amenities and transportation. Full and weekly boarding is provided for pupils between the ages of 11 to 18 years. The school recently achieved academy status.

The school has 165 pupils who are boarders. There are four boarding houses the newest of which was opened in 2008. The pupils are predominately white British with a small number of pupils reflecting other ethnic origins. Recreational and dormitory facilities are provided for each year group. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, enhanced by the extensive school grounds.

The last welfare inspection to the school was 20/10/2010 and received an overall effectiveness judgement of outstanding. The education provision at the school was inspected on 18/01/2007 and was awarded outstanding for overall effectiveness. This was followed by an interim assessment on 02/12/2010 which highlighted that the school's performance had been sustained.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- continue the review and development of catering arrangements.
- ensure that all records are consistently maintained to the exceptionally high standards the school has set itself.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for boarders

Outstanding

Boarding pupils are achieving outstanding outcomes in all areas of their development. They receive excellent levels of support, allowing them to prosper socially, emotionally, physically and educationally. One boarder, due to leave upper sixth form enthused about his time at the school. Describing the whole experience, his journey through the school, commented, 'Fantastic opportunities, especially in supporting future career prospects.' Boarding pupils are very well prepared for life beyond the school, their next stage of life. There is a natural progression towards independence that is propagated throughout the time that pupils spend at the school.

Boarding pupils' affiliation to the school is extremely strong with many thoughts being expressed by more upper sixth form boarders. These boarders felt that they had learnt a great deal from their studies but equally recognised learning experiences gained with friends during the time they had spent at the school, describing fellow boarders as, 'friends for life' and affectionately referring to them as their, 'brotherly family'. A large group of upper sixth form boarders also responded to the following question. At some point in the future, based on the learning opportunities and experiences gained as a boarder would you send your children to the school? This was met with a resounding yes, with boarders asserting, 'without hesitation'.

The school has developed a highly inclusive boarding community, underpinned by strong, meaningful and respectful relationships. Individual differences are accepted and valued by all living and working at the school. This supports boarders to develop trusting relationships with appropriate role models as they progress on their journey through the school. Boarders also learn to take more responsibility for themselves and become more independent. A parent fairly new to boarding confirmed that his son, 'had flourished, especially with his sporting abilities'.

The ability of staff to maintain positive relationships with boarders has a profound effect on boarding pupils as they feel valued, safe and protected and this significantly increases their confidence and self-esteem. Flexible approaches recognising individual differences ensure boarders can fulfil their potential at a pace suited to them. A group of first year boarders confirmed that their induction worked very well and helped them to settle quickly. There are many different staff from both pastoral and education disciplines who are very well known to the boarders. Staff are deployed in suitable numbers both day and night. A clear structure and routine to the day is established and this was seen to be followed seamlessly throughout the course of this inspection. Boundaries and expectations of behaviour are well established.

The views of boarding pupils are actively sought, valued and acted upon. All boarders are clearly able to contribute to the boarding community and influence future direction of boarding. There is considerable representation on different committees and minutes of these meetings show that they sit regularly. Boarders have influenced changes to catering arrangements resulting in the introduction of an alternative catering outlet. Catering remains a topic for frequent discussion and review.

A key strength of the school is located with the extremely broad range of activities and clubs that are open to pupils. Boarders are thriving in an environment which is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities that truly engage boarders' desires and interests. The school website shows the full details of the experiences provided. All activities are subject to strict risk assessment procedures as outlined by the local education authority.

Boarding pupils are very aware of the importance of being fit and healthy. They take responsibility for their own health by choosing healthier food options. Boarding pupils are acutely aware of their own health care needs and will ask for additional support when needed from the

school nurse or other health care professionals if required. The school nurse is undoubtedly central to boarders lives in keeping them fit and active especially with regard to treating sporting injuries. The school medical centre remains an integral element to boarders' lives. All boarders had full confidence that the school nurse would be able to look after them if they were ill or injured.

Quality of boarding provision and care

Outstanding

All staff are extremely committed to providing the best possible care and support to boarding pupils. Staff have consistently high aspirations for boarding pupils and work extremely hard to ensure young people achieve their full potential in relation to their starting points. The residential provision is an intrinsic part of the school and this means there are excellent communication and support systems in place across the school to support boarding pupils. Consequently, all staff are quickly alerted to any issues which may impact upon boarding pupils' full engagement in either setting.

The school has effective systems for the safe handling and storage of medicines. The school nurse holds suitable health records and parental permissions. Boarding pupils' specific health requirements are known and health plans detail the action required to meet those needs. There are strong links to a local doctors surgery and these compliment the nurses inputs. A local general practitioner visits the school twice per week during term time. Arrangements can be put in place for boarders to visit the surgery. Links with more specialist services are implemented if necessary. There is a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid to respond to minor health matters. There is always medical support available during competitive sporting events.

The boarding philosophy of care shows a great deal of empathy towards pupils if they experience difficulties. Equally clear is the school code of conduct that sets out behavioural expectations. Boarders confirm that they are treated fairly. The impact that living away from home can have on some boarders is carefully supported.

There is a very strong commitment to providing boarding pupils with positive, healthy and stimulating experiences, while adopting an organised and safe approach. All challenging activities are risk assessed and only carried out under the supervision of qualified individuals within licensed centres. The level of positive engagement when attending various extra-curricular activities, clubs and societies enables boarding pupils many positive experiences to enhance their self-esteem and allow confidence in their own abilities to grow. Boarding pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to build social networks during their time at the school through taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme and combined cadet forces. Boarding pupils show a real sense of pride with their sporting achievements and their charity work within the local and wider community.

The accommodation is of a high standard and provides a warm, homely environment. Maintenance is efficient and is capable of responding to the exacting demands of the busy boarding houses. Maintenance is prioritised, there is a rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment. Each boarding house has a budget for minor improvements but significant improvements have to be agreed. It is very apparent that boarding pupils are proud of the accommodation as they happily show visitors around.

The school has a five star food rating from local environmental health services. Catering is managed well and there is frequent consultation with pupils on menu design and this allows a good choice of food. Meals are pleasant social occasions and there is mainly positive feedback from pupils on the quality of food they receive. Menus are balanced to ensure suitable nutritional value is being provided. Boarding pupils identified the need to improve the quality with some of the evening meals. An on-going review of the catering arrangements is taking place to enhance

mealtimes and further improve boarders' satisfaction in relation to the quality of each meal. Pupils' special dietary requirements and personal eating habits are known to the catering staff and this means pupils' eating habits can be monitored unobtrusively. The school has recently opened a new food outlet aptly named by pupils as 'grab and go'. This has been hugely popular with boarding pupils as the outlet supports their busy lifestyles.

Boarders' safety

Outstanding

The school has outstanding arrangements in place designed to keep boarding pupils safe at all times. There is a wealth of experience within the school senior management team and this means practice keeps the whole school environment safe. There is robust implementation of policies and procedures that relate to the recruitment of staff. As a result, only suitably checked people work with or have contact with pupils.

Servicing and maintenance schedules are followed and this reduces potential hazards. There is an extensive range of policies and risk assessments in place and the boarding staff team consistently implement procedural guidance to ensure pupils' safety. For example, pupils participate in regular fire drills and can safely exit the living units when needed. A suitable fire risk assessment is in place and advice had been provided by the local fire and rescue service. Boarding pupils support the site security by taking responsibility for closing doors to their boarding accommodation and gates to the surrounding campus to restrict access by members of the public.

The welfare of boarding pupils is safeguarded, with staff having the experience, knowledge, training and familiarity with safeguarding procedures to keep pupils safe. Should an issue arise, prompt referral to external agencies ensures pupils are appropriately protected. The Local Authority Designated Officer confirmed there are no safeguarding concerns.

Appropriate staffing levels, coupled with sensible deployment of staff around the whole campus, are effective in minimising incidents of bullying. Boarding pupils say that bullying is not an issue of concern to them and confirm that it would not be tolerated. Pupils say they feel safe living at the school and this view is replicated by parents and staff. Young people are aware of who they can talk to, including independent people should they have any concerns. Each boarding house has suitable guidance on noticeboards with boarders being fully familiar with the contents of their notice boards. Effective monitoring of behaviours and incidents occurs in line with the school behaviour and sanctions policy. Boarders' occasional indiscretions are clearly recorded. The school communicates transparently with parents if incidents arise. The behaviour and discipline policy is available on the school website.

Staff know how to respond should any pupil go missing or fail to return from leave. They are aware of the local multi-agency protocols and practices in place, which are designed to protect pupils who are missing. This multi-agency response goes a long way to minimising the occasions where pupils become vulnerable or put themselves at risk. Boarding pupils do not go missing. Boarding pupils receive excellent advice and support about personal safety. For example, discussing the potential dangers of using unsecured wireless internet systems and protecting their own information. Boarders also talk knowledgeably about the dangers of cyber-bullying.

Leadership and management of boarding

Outstanding

The leadership, management and organisation of the boarding provision is outstanding. The school is professionally and efficiently run by the senior management team and this means all routines run smoothly. There is drive and desire to improve outcomes for all boarders. The senior management team and boarding staff share and promote a clear vision for the school's future ensuring all pupils remain extremely well cared for and fully supported in all respects. The school

is fully committed to sustained improvement in the quality of pastoral care and education it provides. There is excellent communication and consultation with parents. Excellent partnership arrangements provide extremely well- coordinated support. This is particularly evident when reviewing the health support boarders receive and the continuous work on establishing a safe whole school campus where boarders are safe and all state that they feel safe.

The school service history, as reflected in both welfare and education reports shows continuous improvements have been taking place covering many years. There were no recommendations from the previous welfare inspection. The school meets all the national minimum standards for boarding. The school development plan, an insightful self evaluation provided by the head of boarding, and comments made by a boarding governor identified where further enhancements will be made to the boarding provision. Staff and governors remain enthusiastic about the value of boarding and its contribution to boarders' personal and social development. The boarding community remains at the heart of the school.

Strong and thorough systems are in place to review the quality of pastoral support, identify areas for future improvement and take action to ensure that the school meets boarding pupils and their parents exacting needs and demands. The process for dealing with complaints is fair and transparent. A large volume of survey data returned to Ofsted by boarders and their parents shows an extremely high degree of satisfaction with the quality of support provided. Virtually all agree that the boarding experience maximises their sons' potential. Boarders confidence is clear to be seen. Boarders live in a well ordered community displaying exemplary behaviour. Boarders' views and ideas are actively sought. Regular meetings prompt healthy discussion and debate between everyone to ensure continuity with all practice across each of the four boarding houses.

Staff receive on going support, regular supervision and training as well as opportunities to discuss their practice and review their performance. Staff have access to specific training that supports their professional development. Staff remain child focused and boarding pupils are provided with excellent support from people they trust and respect. All required policies and procedures are in place and known by those required to implement them. Required records are completed and stored securely. A small number of records reviewed by the inspection team would benefit from more detail to establish an improved audit of information.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	136742
Social care unique reference number	SC042778
DfE registration number	888/5401

This inspection 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	Maintained
Number of boarders on roll	165
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	11 to 18
Headteacher	Dr C J Pyle
Date of previous boarding inspection	20/10/2010
Telephone number	01524 580600
Email address	genoffice@lrgs.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

