



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LUCTON SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Lucton School

The Early Years provision was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School/College **Lucton School**

DfE Number **884/6007**

Early Years Registration
Number **EY289937.**

Registered Charity Number **518076**

Address **Lucton School
Lucton
Leominster
Herefordshire
HR6 9PN
England**

Telephone Number **01568 782000**

Fax Number **01568 782001**

Headmistress **Mrs Gill Thorne**

Chair of Governors **Mr David CJ Llewellyn**

Age Range **0 to 18**

Total Number of Pupils **352**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed (180 boys; 172 girls)**

Numbers by Age
0-2 (EYFS): **45** 5-11: **94**
3-5 (EYFS): **24** 11-18: **189**

Number of Day Pupils Total: **268**

Number of Boarders Total: **84**

Full: **74** Weekly: **3** Flexi **7**

Inspection Dates **15 Mar 2016 to 17 Mar 2016**

PREFACE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended. This inspection focuses on the school's compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing primarily on compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS). The inspection occurs over a period of two and a half continuous days in the school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures;
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgement.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with boarders, held discussions with senior members of staff and with governors and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited each of the boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and boarding pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Colette Culligan Reporting Inspector

Mr Andrew Lee Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Senior Master, HMC school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 SUMMARY	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	2
(iii) Progress since the previous inspection	2
3 COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS	3
(a) Boarding provision and care	3
(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding	4
(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision	5

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Lucton School is located on a 40 acre rural site, within easy reach of Leominster in Herefordshire. The school was founded in 1708 by John Pierrepont, originally to provide a Christian education for boys aged seven to thirteen. It is now a registered charity owned by the Lucton Pierrepont Educational Trust, overseen by a board of governors, and provides education for boys and girls aged from three months to eighteen years. There are currently 352 pupils enrolled at the school, with roughly equal numbers of girls and boys. Day pupils come mostly from within a 30 mile radius of the school.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a secure, happy environment within which to encourage the best in every pupil, recognising their unique talents and abilities. In its boarding it aims to create an open, trusting atmosphere within which each boarder is respected as an individual. It intends to encourage a sense of responsibility, leadership skills and an environment which encourages the intellectual, personal, social and cultural development of boarders.
- 1.3 There are 84 boarders in total, of whom 18 are in Years 3 to 7. Boarding accommodation for up to 79 pupils aged between 7 and 18 is provided in Croft House; School Cottage provides accommodation for up to 23 boarders in Years 3 to 8. Both houses are within the school grounds and are supervised by resident houseparents.
- 1.4 The 42 overseas boarders come from 11 different countries, the majority from China, Hong Kong, Spain and Germany. The school provides extra lessons for the 37 of these who require support in speaking English as an additional language (EAL). There are a few boarders identified with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), primarily mild learning difficulties such as dyslexia, and the school provides specialist support as necessary. There are no boarders with education, health and care (EHC) plans .
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection the school has acquired additional land. It has expanded its equestrian centre and upgraded the sports hall. School Cottage has been extended and a general programme of refurbishment of boarding accommodation has continued.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. SUMMARY

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.1 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that responsibility for creating and monitoring all required records is clearly defined.
2. Organise individual boarder's files in such a way that patterns of pastoral and disciplinary matters can be easily identified.
3. Ensure that all staff understand their personal responsibility for minimising risk in the school environment in accordance with health and safety policies.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in March 2013. It judged the quality of boarding to be excellent but recommended that the school should ensure that any complaints are recorded in a way which allows patterns to be identified. The school has put in place systems to facilitate this.

3. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

3.(a) Boarding provision and care

- 3.1 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 There is an appropriate process of induction. New boarders are sent comprehensive written information in advance. A 'buddy' system supports them on arrival, in addition to support provided by house parents and older boarders. Boarders are confident that they can turn to a range of adults for help. There is an independent listener whose contact details, along with those for Childline and the Children's Commissioner, is published in handbooks and displayed on notice boards. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 There is a satisfactory first aid, medical and health policy. This is effectively implemented and overseen by a school matron with appropriate qualifications. Many staff are qualified in first aid. Care plans to ensure the wellbeing of any pupils with chronic conditions were appropriately in place by the end of the inspection. Policies cover medical emergencies and the use of household remedies. Medicines, both prescription and non-prescription, are stored appropriately and their administration is suitably recorded. Suitable accommodation is provided for sick or injured boarders; the two rooms are adjacent to the medical room and have access to separate toilet facilities. The overwhelming majority of questionnaire responses from boarders agreed that they are well looked after if ill or injured. Boarders register with the local doctor and can access emergency dental or other specialist services. Before boarders are allowed to self-medicate they are assessed as sufficiently responsible. Their rights, including that of confidentiality, are appropriately respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders can contact family and friends without hindrance, using their mobile phones, house telephones or the internet. Suitable and age-appropriate restrictions guard against unsafe practices by boarders. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Suitable accommodation is provided for boarders. Inspection evidence does not support the view of a minority of parents that the accommodation is not comfortable. Boarders in Croft House have single rooms, with separate corridors for boys and girls. Younger boarders share rooms in School Cottage, sleeping accommodation appropriately separated by gender. There are comprehensive risk assessments of boarding houses, with regular checks and actions taken to ensure that risk is reduced. Difficulty of access to one room in School Cottage was remedied in the course of inspection. Study facilities in houses are limited and boarders use classrooms for private study. Toilet and washing facilities are suitably private and separate by gender and age. In questionnaire responses and discussions, a few boarders expressed concern about the variations in water temperature of the showers; the school is aware and this is being addressed. Boarding accommodation is well lit, heated and ventilated. Furniture is suitable and bedding is warm and clean. Boarders can personalise their rooms. Electronic access controls mean that only boarders and appropriate adults can enter boarding accommodation. Use of school facilities by the public does not conflict with use by boarders. The use of surveillance equipment to monitor boarders' safety does not compromise boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 A large majority of pupil responses in the questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the school's food. This is not supported by inspection evidence. Meals sampled, menus examined and discussions with pupils and catering staff show that

the food is nutritious and appropriate in quantity, quality and choice. Special dietary needs are met. The dining hall is close to the boarding houses. The main kitchen and house kitchens are clean and tidy. Drinking water is accessible at all times. The school provides boarders with bread and fruit for evening snacks and staff are aware of any specific boarders' needs. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 Laundry is efficiently managed on site, clothing being returned to the correct boarders the same day it is washed. Stationery is provided and there are also weekly trips to a local supermarket where boarders can purchase personal items. Boarders in Croft House may request a personal lockable safe and there are individual lockable cupboards for School Cottage boarders. The school stores boarders' passports and any large amounts of money as requested. The school has and implements a search policy which follows legal guidance. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 There is a suitable range of activities available to boarders, with risk assessment being undertaken as necessary. Although in the questionnaire a small minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the balance of free time and activities this is not supported in inspection evidence. The overwhelming majority expressed satisfaction with the opportunities available to them. Boarders can be alone in their rooms or in safe outside areas as they wish. Televisions, internet facilities and frequent organised trips ensure that boarders have access to the world beyond the school grounds. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The school's written health and safety policy meets requirements. It is implemented effectively by the estates staff so that the premises and accommodation ensure the health, safety and welfare of boarders as far as is practicable. Boarders are unanimous in saying that they feel safe at school. A risk assessment policy assesses major risks and ensures that actions are taken to minimise these. However, teaching staff have not always recognised the everyday potential for risk in classrooms and general areas. The school ensured that action was taken to reduce minor risks identified in the course of the inspection. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school complies with legal requirements for fire safety. There are weekly tests of the fire alarm systems and fire equipment is checked regularly. Fire drills are held at least termly, some of them at times when boarders are resting. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school's safeguarding policy now meets requirements. Staff are trained to an appropriate level and at suitable intervals. Boarders know to whom to turn for help and designated staff make contact with local agencies as required to support the well-being of boarders. Any concerns are recorded in a manner which allows identification of emerging patterns and all records are stored confidentially. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 There is a written school code of conduct and also house rules for boarders; these are understood and accepted as reasonable by boarders. Records show that staff are fair in imposing sanctions. Although in the questionnaire a small minority of boarders and parents said that the school does not deal well with bullying, boarders said in discussions that there is very little bullying or cyber bullying and the school deals quickly with any incidents. Records scrutinized showed that the school is alert to problems, has systems to identify patterns and intervenes appropriately as required. Although a small minority of parents felt that the school did not keep their

children safe and that the experience of boarding did not help their progress and development this was not supported by evidence. A very large majority of boarders report that they feel safe, that staff treat them fairly and that boarders get on together in their boarding houses. Any search of boarders or their possessions is conducted in accordance with official guidance and there is a suitable log of any incidents requiring the use of physical restraint. [NMS 12]

- 3.14 The school has a satisfactory recruitment policy specifying that all required checks are to be completed beforehand and suitable risk assessments have been put in place when appropriate. The school has not fully understood all the regulatory requirements with regard to the completion of the single central register, such as the inclusion of checks for adults who have lived or worked overseas and those for whom checks of prohibition from teaching must be carried out. This has not impacted on boarders' safety and the school's understanding of what must be included has been clarified. The school has now created appropriate central recruitment records. All resident adults are employees of the school and there are no children over 16 who are not pupils of the school living in the boarding accommodation. Visitors to houses are kept under appropriate supervision to prevent any unsupervised access to boarders or their accommodation. The school requires those parents who live overseas to appoint guardians for their children. [NMS 14]

3.(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision

- 3.15 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 The school's suitable boarding principles are published in the boarding handbook and are displayed on house noticeboards. The atmosphere in houses indicates that these work in practice to the benefit of the boarders. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Governors monitor the effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding and take action as necessary. Although in the questionnaire a minority of parents said that they do not think boarding is well organised and managed, inspection evidence shows that boarding staff in conjunction with the senior leaders manage the boarding houses effectively. There are suitable mechanisms to ensure liaison between residential and other academic staff. Senior boarding staff demonstrate skills and general knowledge appropriate to their roles in the houses. Senior school leaders have not understood some of the precise legal requirements regarding staff recruitment and responsibility for monitoring many of the required policies is informally shared rather than clearly defined. Standards overall have been consistently met so that the school's leadership and management actively promote the wellbeing of boarders. Boarding staff are experienced and trained. All policies and documents required are maintained by the school. Individual boarder's records contain all the required information but these are not collated in a way which allows for identification of patterns of concerns. Actions are taken to improve outcomes for boarders as appropriate. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All staff working in boarding have job descriptions and receive induction training. Their regular appraisals cover their boarding as well as their teaching roles and they are given access to training to promote their professional practice in boarding. All adults living in school accommodation are employees of the school with clearly defined roles. There are always sufficient numbers of staff on duty so that boarders are always under the supervision of an identified and qualified member of staff. Staff patrol the houses and site. They also monitor the whereabouts of pupils using surveillance equipment in suitable locations, so that they know the whereabouts of

boarders or how to find them at all times. They know and can implement the school's missing child policy. There is always at least one adult sleeping in each house overnight, easily contactable by boarders. Residential staff have suitable accommodation, separated from that of boarders and boarders do not have inappropriate access to this. [NMS 15]

- 3.19 Boarders value each other for what and who they are and do not experience any discrimination. Boarding care is sensitive to the range of cultural backgrounds and the individual needs of boarders so that all are supported appropriately. [NMS 16].
- 3.20 A minority of pupils reported through the questionnaire that the school does not ask for their opinions and respond to them. This view was not supported by inspection evidence or in discussion with boarders. A boarding council meets regularly with senior staff and there is also a school council. Corridor monitors and prefects act as house representatives, ensuring boarders' views are discussed with staff. Examples of changes that have resulted include the creation of a cinema room and shower refurbishments. Boarders are confident that they can express their views to the house staff without prejudice. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school has a written complaints policy which now meets requirements. A minority of parental questionnaire responses said that the school has not handled their concerns well. Scrutiny of the complaints log shows that the school identifies those complaints which relate to boarding and acts in accordance with its policy and takes action in response to complaints, whether they are upheld or not. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 House prefects and corridor monitors act primarily in a caring role and help support the smooth running of the houses. They have specific duties and responsibilities and may only impose mild sanctions, which are monitored by house staff. School prefects have defined roles, are trained and monitored. All prefects understand their responsibilities for safeguarding. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not use long-term lodgings. [NMS 20]