



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

BOARDING SCHOOL

**Wymondham College**

**Wymondham  
Norfolk  
NR18 9SZ**

*Lead Inspector*  
David Welch

*Announced Inspection*  
6th November 2006      11:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Boarding Schools*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

# SCHOOL INFORMATION

<b>Name of school</b>	Wymondham College
<b>Address</b>	Wymondham Norfolk NR18 9SZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01953 609000
<b>Fax number</b>	01953603313
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	Wymondham College
<b>Name of Head</b>	Acting Principal Mr Dominic Findlay
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Acting Head of Boarding Mr Andrew Boorman
<b>Age range of boarding pupils</b>	11 to 18 years
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2003

## **Brief Description of the School:**

Wymondham College is a co-educational, State Maintained boarding school, with MFL and Technology College Status, admitting pupils aged 11 to 18 years. There are 1053 students, about half of whom are boarders. It is located between the large market towns of Wymondham and Attleborough. The city of Norwich is about 10 miles away to the north east. The school has good road links to London and the Midlands. There is a local rail service.

Boarding is currently organised into 6 Houses; 1 for the youngest, Yr.7 boarders, 1 for the oldest, Yr.13 boarders and the other four for Yrs. 8 to 12. Each House has a Head of House (HoH), a Deputy Head of House (Deputy HoH), 6 'resident' members of teaching staff and 3 'resident' Matrons working shifts. On any night there are likely to be six staff sleeping in each boarding house and this includes weekends. One advantage identified by boarders is that they have on hand at most times during the week teaching staff who can help them with their schoolwork. Each house has Domestic Assistants. The laundry is organised by the Matrons.

When they are first admitted in Yr.7, boarders sleep in multi-occupancy 'dorms' (with about 5 others of the same age and gender), and progress to double and single bedrooms as they get older. Every boarder in Yrs. 11 and 13, the GCSE and A-level years, will likely have a single bedroom. Each boarding house is divided into a male 'side' and a female 'side' with strict rules about access being enforced.

The college also provides facilities for what are described as 'Day Boarders'. These children have access to all the college facilities from early morning to late evening and do everything that full boarders do except sleep on the premises. This facility is to aid parents with particular life or work styles. Currently, between 70 and 80% of boarders go home at weekends depending on what might be on offer at school.

There is an on-site Refectory and Chapel. The college has extensive sports facilities, including games pitches, a Sports Hall and a heated indoor swimming pool.

The school now takes its pupils mainly from the local community, but also from further afield. Many young people who board live quite close to the campus. There are some pupils from overseas and a number from 'service families'.

An almost £10m building project to provide additional boarding facilities, more classrooms and other communal space, sufficient to increase considerably the number of pupils, has started with projected completion within two years. When this happens, Yr. 12 boarders will have boarding facilities specifically for them, reducing the age range in the 'main houses' to Yrs.8 to 11.

# SUMMARY

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

Boarding schools like Wymondham College have to have a big inspection every three years. The last one was in 2003.

This year, inspectors visited the college before half term to give all the boarders a chance to fill in a questionnaire dealing with what it is like to live at the school. 480 of you completed the questionnaire. The information you gave to inspectors was so useful. You said far more good things about the College than bad things. Thanks to all of you who took the time to fill in the questionnaires.

To help the inspectors prepare for the inspection, Mr Boorman sent them a lot of information about the college.

After half term inspectors spent 3 days at Wymondham College - on Monday 6<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2006 - seeing how staff look after boarders in the boarding houses. The inspectors selected some of you to talk with them in discussion groups. They also met some of you on your own or with your friends. This may have been because on your questionnaire you said you would like to see an inspector or it might have been because you said something that inspectors wanted to follow up with you. All of these meetings, too, provided some very helpful information. Some boarders took the inspectors on guided tours of the boarding houses and other places around the school. This was very interesting.

Inspectors ate some meals in the Refectory to test the quality of the food you are given. They found this to be very nice, with lots of choices and a great Salad Bar.

Inspectors also spoke to the following people: -

- The staff in each boarding house. In Peel this also included the GAP's.
- The Principal, Mr Findlay
- The Head of Boarding Mr Boorman
- The Chaplain
- The Bursar, who is in charge of health and safety around the school
- Mr Smith, who arranges trips, outings and activities

The inspectors spent some time with the Medical Centre staff finding out about what happens when pupils are not well.

They also looked at some of the records kept at school. Some of these were about boarders and some were about the staff.

The inspectors came back after the inspection to tell Mr Findlay and Mr Boorman what they had found out. Mr Blake, the parent governor was also at that meeting.

## **What the school does well:**

- ✓ The food – you said some very good things about the school food. There were only a few negative comments. You told inspectors that you like the Food Committee.
- ✓ Boarding Houses – You were very pleased with your boarding houses. They are clean and quite homely. You can decorate your bed spaces with posters and photographs if you want to. You said to inspectors that you had no problems about privacy in the toilets or showers. The boarders did not identify any areas that they felt were unpleasant.
- ✓ Standards of behaviour – inspectors saw all of you behaving very well.
- ✓ Staff/pupil relationships – inspectors saw staff and boarders getting on well. The atmosphere in Lincoln was especially relaxed
- ✓ Numbers of staff on duty – Inspectors thought there were enough house staff on duty. There are usually six adults sleeping in each boarding house at night. You liked having teachers around to help you with schoolwork, too.
- ✓ The GAP's – the Yr.7's liked having GAP's around.
- ✓ Safety – you told inspectors that you thought boarders were well protected from harm here.
- ✓ Discrimination – you told inspectors that people at the college were treated equally and fairly.
- ✓ House Councils – you told inspectors that you liked the House Councils and these were a way that the school asked you about life here.
- ✓ Free time and 'chilling out' – you told inspectors that you are sometimes allowed to 'slob around', see friends in school or socialise.
- ✓ Laundry and washing clothes - boarders told inspectors the arrangements worked well.
- ✓ Head of Boarding – inspectors thought that Mr Boorman made all the arrangements for the inspection in a very efficient way.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

- ✓ The showers have been improved a lot since the last inspection.
- ✓ Bullying – boarders said that there was still a little bit of bullying, but this was usually dealt with. You mentioned some staff who were particularly good at dealing with bullies and this has improved.
- ✓ A lot of new furniture has been bought for the boarding houses.
- ✓ The school has made some progress towards giving boarders more personal space. A number of you who remember the 'open' dorms said that you understand why the 'piggy pens' have been built, but they don't give you any more privacy, as the partitions are too low. Inspectors felt that boarders would soon get used to them.
- ✓ Yr.12 pupils have been given some training about how they can help younger boarders.
- ✓ You have all been given a safe in which to store your personal things and 'treasures'.
- ✓ The House Guides give better information
- ✓ The food has improved.

## **What they could do better:**

- Inspectors thought that staff from the Medical Centre should use their medical knowledge more to assist Matrons with keeping records about medication in the boarding houses.
- While inspectors thought that staff did talk among themselves about how best to look after boarders who have special needs or who are specially vulnerable, there should be written plans of action.
- Inspectors asked the college to deal with any incidents of queue jumping, especially in the Refectory and any older pupils who barged younger ones off the pavement.
- Inspectors asked the college to make sure every house had a Logbook where complaints could be written down.
- While some differences are a good thing between boarding houses, in matters like rules and punishments these should be the same. There should not be a rule in one house for which door you are allowed to use and the rules for house visiting should be the same.

- Inspectors asked the college to check that all staff are knocking and waiting before entering a bedroom. This was so that boarders could have some privacy.
- They asked that the arrangements for Peel boarders are changed in the first 3 weeks of the year to make sure they can speak to families by telephone. 'Peelers' said that queues could be so long that some people couldn't use the house phone before it was time to go to bed.
- Inspectors thought that some parts of the school could be gloomy and the lighting should be improved. Also that the Pond should be fenced in.

So, there were a lot of very good things that inspectors found out about at Wymondham College. You told them about some things that had improved and about a few things that were not so good.

Thank you once again for helping inspectors during the inspection. Your help was very important and much appreciated.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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# 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)

**The Commission considers Standards 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.**

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

**6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, 48 and 49.**

The quality in this outcome area is good. The physical, mental and emotional needs of the boarders are generally well met. The college encourages and supports the boarders in leading healthy lives. Increased monitoring and supervision from medical staff in the matter of records would further improve this area while written welfare plans would ensure that all staff are informed of planned actions and support for boarders.

## EVIDENCE:

The matter of smoking among pupils did not appear to be a significant problem. Neither staff nor boarders mentioned it except in the context of smoke from staff accommodation coming in to a boarder's bedroom. The college will wish to investigate and remedy this situation, if necessary. The Commission's inspectors were informed that there have been one or two incidents of older pupils returning to school having consumed small quantities of alcohol, and the Medical Centre staff are aware that on one occasion a young person was said to be slightly drunk, but, again, the misuse of alcohol was not a significant issue.

All boarders reported that they have been provided with a safe that has a digital code for opening. These were seen during boarding house tours. The

college had initially suggested them as a solution to the problem of secure storage for older boarders who self medicate. The idea was extended throughout the school to provide a safe place for boarders to keep their personal items or 'treasures'. When the children either forget the code, or the battery back-up fails, they can ask a member of staff to open the safe with a master key.

There are two full time nurses in the college Medical Centre. Both nurses confirmed that they hold current Personal Identification Numbers (PIN's) and have no problem keeping up with the training required to maintain their registration. They work 24-hour shifts and have some relief from a colleague who comes in at weekends. She is available on the sports field for injuries that might happen there. There is also a part time administrator who helps with paperwork.

Both nurses have recently attended a first aid course, they said. They belong to an informal, self-support group of nurses from independent schools, which they find very useful. They have access to specialist advice from an asthma nurse and a diabetic nurse – the school has three children with diabetes. In one case a procedure new to the nurses was being used to administer insulin. This involved continual dispensing on demand from a 'pump'. The Medical Centre staff felt a little exposed, as they did not have all the required background knowledge to support the boarder.

If necessary, for students with mental health problems, referrals can be made to the Bethal Clinic, but it takes a long time before appointments are confirmed. The nurses can access chiropody, physiotherapy, speech therapy, dental services and contraceptive advice for boarders.

The school's GP holds clinics at the college twice a week. Until recently the school's GP was a male doctor, but that has now changed. It was suggested to the medical staff that they ask students on every occasion if they would like to see the doctor alone rather than wait until a child asks to do so. This is good practice.

For conditions that are reasonably serious, or likely to require isolation for more than a few days, boarders go home or to a guardian if their family is overseas. But, the Medical Centre is staffed 24/7, even when no student is staying overnight. Some boarders said that they had stayed overnight in the Medical Centre. They said the beds were comfortable and they had a television to watch, but not during the daytime, which seemed a little harsh. There are separate 'wards' for male and female students, each with separate washing and toilet facilities.

No medication is dispensed directly to students from the Medical Centre. After delivery, it is taken by the Matrons to the individual houses. There is little, if any, oversight by trained medical staff and no monitoring. It was felt

that the coordination between Medical Centre staff and Matrons needs to be more robust. **A recommendation has been made to this effect.** In most cases, the audit trail between administration of home remedies such as paracetamol was not of a sufficient standard. The strength and dosage should be shown so that staff can be sure that no over dosing happens. There needs to be some acknowledgement, and protocols introduced, in regard to the problems that could arise with medication being brought from home by boarders for administration by staff. In some cases this might even be 'controlled' medication. **A recommendation will be made about this.** Lincoln boarders take responsibility for their own medication.

Both nurses see the acting Head of Boarding as their line manager. They don't have any teaching role in regard to PSHE, but they mentioned having a slot with Yr.10 children in relation to stress management, especially around exams.

They confirmed that they have each attended child protection training.

There had been various outbreaks of diarrhoea and vomiting in the last twelve months. While environmental health authorities were made aware of this, no tests were undertaken by them to establish what might have been the cause.

The Boarding Schools Professional Inspector (BSPI) interviewed the college Chaplain. He plays a part in supporting pupils through bereavement. The local authority also makes a trained counsellor available one afternoon a week mainly to support day pupils. Referrals are through the college and while self-referral is not unknown it is not encouraged. The school also employs the counsellor one evening a week to see boarders. Boarders confirmed the availability of the counsellor. One child suggested that the counsellor had given him strategies for dealing with children who were bullying him.

Homesickness is well dealt with by staff. On one occasion a young pupil was seen to be quite tearful – the inspection took place immediately after a two-week break for half term. Staff dealt very sensitively with the matter, providing useful distraction techniques and advice. The boarder survey showed that children had a range of people to talk to if they were unhappy.

There is a smaller number of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) than might be expected in the school.

In a pupil group this size it would be surprising if a number of children did not have problems associated with health, both physical and mental,

vulnerability and/or isolation. It is important that if this is the case the children concerned each have a 'welfare plan' for dealing with the condition identified. While the confidence of the Commission's inspectors remained high that the problems were being dealt with, few if any welfare plans were available on children's case files. Only one was seen that provided the required information to equip staff with, and show evidence of, the steps that were to be taken to manage the problem and support the boarder concerned. Another noted the condition, but stopped short of determining in writing the actions advised for dealing with it in the course of day-to-day life for the child. **The Commission would expect to see welfare plans that identify the condition and give staff information about how they as individuals, and as a group, can support the child concerned.**

During the course of the inspection, which lasted for three full days, meals were taken with pupils in the college Refectory. These included breakfast, lunch and evening meals. The oldest boarders, Yr.13 pupils, eat all their meals separately in their own boarding house. The meals are prepared here and Lincoln has its own catering staff employed by the school.

The food in general received very positive feedback from boarders. Only 56 boarders said that meals 'never' provided a balanced diet. More than double that number said they 'always' provided a balance while almost 270 boarders said they 'usually' or 'sometimes' did so. Observation by inspectors suggested that any complaints about greasiness were not well founded. One boarder said that the food was not as good as home, but 'pretty OK for school food'.

The recommendation made in 2005 that the College authorities may wish to monitor the quality of some food items (particularly at breakfast and some pasta meals) to ensure appetising appearance and preparation and also to consider whether current cleaning arrangements for trays and cutlery were sufficiently robust had been followed up with a questionnaire to pupils by catering staff carried out on Jan 10<sup>th</sup> 2006. In the Pre-Inspection Questionnaire (PIQ) for the 2006 visit an appendix showed correspondence between senior staff concerned with catering matters. As a result, the college said it changed suppliers of meat so that things like sausages have 85% meat content and no 'additives'. Chicken and eggs are free range. The Salad Bar had an overhaul and the range of salads offered has increased. Oily fish and protein items increased. The matter of cooking pasta has been looked into. The college now purchases a more expensive product, which means it does not go soggy so quickly and staff are now competent in using the combi ovens so mistakes are less frequent. In fact, on one occasion during the visit the pasta continued to look unappetising, but actually tasted quite nice. The vegetarian menu has been improved. There is lots more 'Quorn' being used. There is a continued drive to improve evening meals. Two induction pads and woks have been purchased to give boarders fresh stir-fried meals at least once a fortnight. Some more healthy option dishes

have been introduced. Hot dishes are available at all meals. The Salad Bar is particularly impressive with a wide variety of choices. Pupils are not restricted to the number of items they can take. Waste was not seen as a problem.

A vegetarian boarder in the pupil survey raised one matter. S/he said that there was sometimes 'cross contamination' because catering staff used the same tongs for meat, such as sausages and bacon, as they used for non-meat items. This matter was discussed with the catering manager who said that he could not guarantee that it never happened, but staff are aware of this and try to ensure that different utensils are always used. Staff who eat in their own 'Bistro' at lunchtime had the same range of food items available except for what the catering manager described as 'one or two more adult tastes' such as garlic and olives. In fact, these were also seen to be available the next day for children in the Refectory.

The withdrawal of salt was an issue for some pupils and on the pupil survey this matter was raised by a number of boarders. The catering manager had some sympathy for the children, but is bound by Norfolk County Council guidelines as to what can be provided. He has a very pragmatic approach in stocking vending machines. His view is that day pupils can have fizzy drinks and sweets after school so vending machines that are set not to dispense these items up to 4:00pm will do so after that time. This then becomes a matter of choice for the boarders and their parents.

Boarders were clear that they can have snacks and drinks in their boarding houses. The provision of toasters so that they can make toast after school has finished was remarked on positively by boarders.

The matter of dirty trays has not been completely successful, however, and several wet trays with food debris were seen on the 'clean stack'.

The meals times have to be carefully calculated with almost military precision to ensure that all students are fed in time. While this leads to a feeling of general 'busyness' and inevitable bustle, mealtimes did not feel pressured. Water is available at midday and a wide variety of drinks at other times. Breakfast in Lincoln, with the oldest boarders, was particularly relaxed with students in pyjamas and dressing gowns coming and going – just as they might when they are at home.

All of the house staff were confident that they would pick up on any boarder who was not eating or who had an eating disorder. They felt that a boarder's friends would come to them if they were worried about a boarder who was either missing meals or only eating very small amounts of food. One Head of House said that his staff had identified a boarder with an eating disorder that parents did not know about.

Boarder can purchase tuck from the Tuck Shop or bring items from home.

The laundry facilities are particularly impressive with all washing being done individually in boarding houses. The children reported a very good service in this regard. They are responsible for putting their dirty washing in laundry baskets and for retrieving it when clean. All items must be named. Boarders said they decide for themselves when they change clothes with no designated days for, say, clean shirts or blouses, trousers or skirts, underclothing or socks. The younger boarders' care, not surprisingly, involves a little more prescription and they have no hand washing facilities. Older boarders can hand wash delicate items. There is no dry cleaning service.

# 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 appropriately responded to.(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 and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises.(NMS 39)
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. (NMS 41)
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards.(NMS 47)

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

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

**2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 22, 26, 28, 29, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47**

The quality in this outcome area is adequate. This is a reasonably strong area, but there are improvements that can be considered. These include complaints logs, checks on applicants for staff posts, campus lighting and safety-guarding the pond. But, children are generally protected by the school's procedures and safe in this environment. If some inconsistencies were redressed, particularly in the way that boarding houses operate in relation to one another, it would ensure fairness of treatment for all boarders.

## EVIDENCE:

Bullying did not seem to be a problem for the vast majority of boarders. From responses to questionnaires in 2003 86% of pupils reported 'never', or 'hardly ever' being bullied. In November 05, the teachers new to the pastoral role said that the ethos was one in which children 'will tell about any bullying'. One person said they were 'really impressed with the anti-bullying strategies'. New, younger pupils said in November 2005 that any bullying was dealt with. There were places to go if they wanted to be alone. They mentioned in particular the 'nice atmosphere' and the Chapel and library. In the October 2006 pupil survey of boarders, 480 questionnaires were returned. Only 5 juniors (Yrs 7 and 8) and 12 seniors (Yrs.9 to 13) reported being bullied. This represents just over 3.5% of boarders who responded.

During the actual time on site this year minor bullying came a little more to the fore. While no incident of pupil-on-pupil bullying was seen, some younger boarders did say in discussion groups that there was some queue jumping by older students, especially in the Refectory, and some instances of them being pushed off the pavements. One pupil reported being spat at. S/he reported this, but could not identify the culprit. There was some dissatisfaction about the way reported bullying had been dealt with in only a very small number of cases. In other cases, boarders said that bullying had been well dealt with and in this regard one or two staff were named as being particularly sensitive, receptive and effective. One Head of House said that bullying in his boarding house had reduced significantly over the last 8 or 9 years and this year 'had been the best ever'. Boarders and staff, too, confirmed that there has been a considerable reduction in bullying in recent times and where it does occur it is being dealt with in most cases. The Commission was confident that bullying was, apart from a small number of cases, not a problem at Wymondham College.

The boarders did not mention, when asked, any 'initiation ceremonies' that might be considered harmful, painful or degrading in any way. One boarder said that he had been provided with various suggested strategies for dealing with older pupils who were giving him a hard time. A Head of House showed considerable insight into the limited bullying that was taking place in his boarding house, but two others appeared not to know about particular situations raised by boarders during the visit. This was discussed with them on an individual basis.

The college has a senior member of staff responsible for child protection. It was possible to discuss her role in inducting new staff and for refreshing child protection training to more long-serving colleagues. She uses, she said, a Power Point presentation for delivering the information. GAP students receive a shortened version. She also provides training for Yr.12 pupils in regard to their support for young students. Each house staff group confirmed that they receive child protection training. They know the name of

the college's designated person. Students, too, know the identity of the staff member. The child protection training for staff includes an overview of safeguarding children at the college, an objective of which is to provide a safe environment in which they can learn. The learning set involves case examples and a quiz on what staff know, the categories of abuse and the signs and symbols associated with each. Helpfully, it discusses the do's and don'ts of dealing with children's disclosures. The Child Protection Co-ordinator is herself well trained and maintains her knowledge by regular attendance at child protection seminars and courses. She has good links, she said, with the local child protection unit in Wymondham.

Trips out of school are categorised by the local authority as 'A' for non-risky or non-adventurous activities or 'B' for the more adventurous or residential outings. 'A' trips require staff to have done a 4-hour first aid course while 'B' trips need them to have attended for four days. These have to be 'refreshed' every four years. Trips have included a visit to Barcelona, a PE trip to Madrid, language trips to Berlin and France and a skiing trip. Trips outside school require what is termed a 'CF1' form that providers have to complete and return up to 5 weeks beforehand. A governor has been nominated to review the paperwork for every trip and permission has to be gained from the Governor's meeting.

On-site activities take place on some weekends, but Lincoln students rarely participate. The pupil survey showed a range of evening and weekend activities for juniors and seniors. It was pleasing to note that staff accept that at times young people should be given the chance to simply 'chill out' or relax with friends in front of the television, say on a Sunday afternoon.

While some differences between boarding houses add to the charm of the college, and to the individual character of daily life for boarders, in certain areas a consistent approach should be encouraged. These include sanctions and school rules. It was here that inconsistencies were noted. In Kett Hall, for instance, only older boarders could use the front door. Visiting other houses was an area where there were a lot of differences. The house staff in one house described themselves as 'the friendly house', but discouraged boarders from other houses visiting them, they said.

In one house, 75 separate sanctions were noted since the beginning of the term in September while in others only a handful had been given. For instance, in New Hall there were 21 and in Kett only three (3). In Peel, only 5 sanctions had been given this academic year. One Head of House put this down, very gently and without criticism of colleagues, to 'better at catching people' and maybe others 'turning a blind eye' in certain houses. This applied in particular to the confiscation of camera phones. Some discussion groups (only consisting of boarders, it must be said) felt that sanctions are applied more strictly to them than to day pupils. In Lincoln, action had been taken against two boarders who had transgressed when at home for the

weekend. The legitimacy of this approach, on the grounds that it brings the college into disrepute, could be open to challenge.

One boarding house was described by younger boarders as 'not really homely' and the facilities varied in some respects across the six residential units.

Some boarders said that they couldn't go to bed earlier than 9.00pm because Yr.12 students were still doing prep. Others said that they could not get up on Sundays before 8:00am even though they were awake. They had to remain in bed, and not talk, until they were given permission by Matron to get up and come downstairs. In one room, young boarders said that they could not come down until they had been 'dismissed' and they were sometimes forgotten. The position of this bedroom, and the notice on the door, means that this need not happen.

The Yr 8's and 9's pointed out that there seem to be different prep rules in boarding houses.

Staying in school uniform during the evening, when others had the chance to be in their own personal clothing, was widely used as a sanction in one house. The Head of House defended this position as one that 'makes the point, is not onerous, but fair'. However, it appeared not to be associated with any offence against the dress code and is just an 'easy target' for staff.

But, in general, boarders did not feel disadvantaged and said that sanctions were probably used 'quite fairly'. No boarder referred to sanctions in the pupil survey. Only the younger ones said that their house was 'too strict' or 'Matron was strict'.

The very youngest children reported that gaining merits and de-merits was a routine process and getting 'raffle tickets' that gave them a chance of a prize at half term was something they welcomed, but sometimes knew little about. Older children said that getting raffle tickets was very difficult.

The acting Head of Boarding monitors sanctions.

The general standard of behaviour by pupils, both day and boarders, was of a high order and no incidents of indiscipline were observed.

The matter of restraint procedures was raised with each house staff group. None of the staff said that they had any training or written guidance on this aspect. **A recommendation has been made about this.** The Child Protection Coordinator did mention that during her induction sessions the issue of appropriate and inappropriate physical contact is discussed. This might initiate some sharing of ideas about comforting a child who was upset,

especially a younger student, but might also encompass what to do if two pupils were fighting.

Apparently, the previous Principal kept a record centrally of complaints against staff on her personal computer and removed the record when she left. This is not felt to be appropriate and the lack of access to previous information puts the current administration at a disadvantage. The form on which complaints are noted are specific to those against staff. However, house logs note all complaints. In Cavell, a recent complaint about an unfair sanction had been looked into and an appropriate response made. In Peel and Kett there had been no complaints since 2003 and in Fry none for two years. Two boarding houses, New Hall and Lincoln did not have a complaints log, although Mr Boorman later said that the former had 'a ring binder' and **a recommendation has been made about this.**

The college does not have a prefect system. Older students do have a support role, however, but this does not seem to extend to discipline. Older pupils can train as lifeguards and this was mentioned as a real positive.

The Fire Logs were not checked by the inspectors, but during boarding house tours boarders confirmed that fire drills do take place, mainly at times when pupils are still up. Drills that have happened during the night have usually been the result of false alarms, maybe an insect in the sensor! The staff confirmed that of those students whose first language is not English everybody is able to easily understand fire safety instructions sufficient to allow them to evacuate the building in an emergency. A Fire Safety Officer visited the college and future visits will be on 'a risk assessment' basis.

No boarder said that the GAP students infringed their privacy, but the youngest boarders did mention that one Matron, in particular, sometimes walked into their rooms without knocking or knocked and walked straight in before getting a response. They found this unacceptable. **A recommendation has been made in regard to this issue.**

No privacy issues were raised in relation to showering, bathing or the toilets. However, some girls did say that where screens had been provided the glass was alternately plain and opaque so some vision through them is possible. They said that they 'took some getting used to'. Any supervision of showering, where it did occur, perhaps with the youngest children, was not intrusive. Boarders confirmed that no interference occurs when they are using the showers or toilets even though partitions do not extend fully to the floor or ceiling in each cubicle.

The staff member with Human Resources responsibilities provided a list of the staff employed since September 2005 so that the numbers and dates of any police check or Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosures could be

examined. The list extended to 74 new staff who have come to work at Wymondham College in the last fourteen and a half months. Of these, 35 appear to have taken up their post before a CRB certificate was obtained by the school, some by a few days, but a number by months. These included catering staff who would not normally have unsupervised access to children, but the list also contains staff with a great deal of time spent with children. Some staff who had a 'delayed' CRB disclosure were checked against the DfES List 99 as a precaution. In two cases a CRB check was only sought 7 weeks after the people concerned started work at the college. In fairness, the guidelines covering the recruitment checks on staff in boarding schools have been in a state of flux in the last year and some of the apparent failings are undoubtedly due to this. Things are clearer now and staff must not take up their posts until an Enhanced CRB certificate has been obtained. **The recommendation made below has reinforced this point.**

The PIQ sent to the Commission ahead of the inspection states that no checks are made with previous employers where the applicant had contact with vulnerable adults or children. Standard BS38.2 is clear about employer's responsibility to check, where feasible, the reasons for the employment ending. **A recommendation has been made below about this point.**

Four staff who took up their posts since September 2005 were selected at random and their recruitment looked into. In each case they had completed an application form and provided the required details. Each had a current CRB disclosure. There were written references for all and a declaration had been asked for from referees that the person was suitable to work with children. Every new appointee had given proof of identity, including a photograph. In three cases interview assessment notes were available. Each had a contract of employment, including the financial aspects, confirmation of induction and a job description. In these cases the recruitment checks were sufficiently robust.

Despite saying in November 2005 that spouses and other people over 18 years old living on site, but not employed by the college, do have CRB's, the PIQ provided this time does not confirm this. This matter was discussed with the Acting Principal who said that he was not certain that CRB checks extended to spouses and families living away from the boarding houses. This might be good practice, but is not, in fact, required under the National Minimum Standards.

The BSPI discussed with the Bursar the checking of cleaners. Most are employed by the school and are CRB checked. Contract cleaners, who clean classrooms, are not CRB'd by the school.

The college personnel includes a security guard who patrols the grounds at night. There is Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) coverage of some outside areas. Boarders overwhelmingly stated that they felt properly protected from harm by those who look after them.

The discussion with nurses took place in early evening after the clocks had been put back. The walk to the Medical Centre was very dark indeed. The road outside the Centre had no streetlights and could be quite forbidding, especially for younger pupils. Boarders in general reported that they did not like going down to the Medical Centre after dark and almost always went in two's. A problem came about if one of them was kept in and the other had to walk back to the boarding house on their own. The site generally felt quite gloomy in places and would benefit from improved lighting. The Bursar confirmed that the matter is being looked into. **A recommendation will be made about this in order to support him.**

Security in the boarding houses is quite tight later at night and during early mornings when boarders are not routinely coming and going. Each outside door is provided with a digital lock. Students all know the 4-digit code, which is the same for all such doors across the site. It is changed quite often. Staff have the option of dropping the latch on the inside so that even if visitors know the code they cannot enter the boarding house. The darker nights mean that children must not play outside for so long, although each main boarding house has outside floodlights for recreation after dark.

The children mentioned that they had heard that pupils had been thrown, or had fallen, in the unfenced pond between Peel, Kett and Lincoln. Also, that bags and shoes had been thrown in. Staff refuted this, although they did say that as a prank a boat had been launched on the pond some time ago. It seemed incongruous that this area remained unfenced, and thus a potential danger, when steps had been taken to inform pupils about the forthcoming building work, hazardous areas had been fenced off or taped and safe working practices introduced when plant was being moved around. The Bursar said that he recognised the possible dangers of an unfenced pond and that he would like to take suitable steps to ensure that accidents did not happen. The matter was, ultimately, one about which the Governors had to take a decision. **A recommendation has been made below in regard to this matter to support the Bursar's approach.**

Recently there has been a redrafting of those areas considered to be 'out of bounds'. The college is local authority maintained and follows Norfolk County Council's (NCC) guidelines for risk assessments – drama, PE, swimming pool, science labs, Design and Technology. Other areas are subject to individual risk assessment using NCC format. Heads of Houses identify risks in their own areas and produce Risk Assessments (RA) for each house. Annual review of RA's take place in the summer vacation and are dealt with – e.g.

removal of the old assault course from the woods. The stairways to the boiler house have been gated and locked, the windows in boarding houses restricted and windows opening on to courtyards have either been removed or changed. A Health & Safety briefing was given to all pupils in preparation for major works starting soon – a £9.8m new build.

Staff said that things that are broken or worn are replaced very quickly indeed. The boarders said that this happened sometimes, but at other times no action seemed to be taken 'for ages'.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.(NMS 14)
- 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)

**The Commission considers Standards 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

11, **14, 18**, 27, 43 and 46

The quality in this outcome area is excellent. Students generally enjoy the boarding experience. They achieve very good social and personal development. Both 'key' **National Minimum Standards** in this area are met, one commendably.

## **EVIDENCE:**

There is a relatively small number of children who are from overseas, of a different race or from another culture. House staff from Kett Hall said that they probably have the most overseas boarders. No racial, cultural or sexual discrimination of any kind was observed throughout the inspection and no boarder mentioned it in the pupil survey, in discussion groups or face to face with inspectors. Inspectors saw no children with physical disabilities. At the meeting with Yr.7 boarders in November 2005 a Classroom Assistant was present to assist a child with visual impairment. This was good practice.

Each boarding house is separated into 'sides' according to gender. There are strict rules for male boarders about not encroaching on to the female 'side' and vice versa. During boarding house 'tours' pupil guides adhered to this rule without fail. Even with some perceived justification on his part, a young male boarder had been subject to 'internal suspension', basically a regular programme of reporting to a designated area, for infringing the rule, senior staff informed inspectors.

Pupils eat together in the Refectory and there is no segregation by gender in this regard. A young boarder mentioned in the pupil survey some unhappiness at her relationships with other pupils, but when speaking to an inspector was reluctant to give further details. One boarder said that he had been called names by 'mates in the dorm' that drew attention to what he said was his 'clumsiness'.

The prevailing viewpoint from house staff is that no student comes to Wymondham College with poor English language skills. The staff confirmed that there is no pressure on students from overseas to speak English all the time, when they may sometimes wish to converse in their national language with pupils from their own country. There is a 'paired reading' scheme in which older students assist younger ones with literacy skills.

One quite impressive feature concerns the way in which a student was able to observe his religious beliefs. Matrons and catering staff cooperated with the boarder to ensure that he was not disadvantaged or put in a difficult position.

The Catering Manager confirmed that his staffs are able to accommodate special diets, including gluten-free and nut allergies. He has not been approached, he said, to provide special meals for any student with diabetes, but he was confident that this would be possible.

It was apparent from answers in the pupil questionnaires that boarders do have free time. A considerable number of them said that they just 'chill out' or 'slob out' at times, especially in the evenings and at weekends. This time could be spent just being 'with friends' or 'socialising'. It was pleasing to hear staff say that they did not put pressure on boarders to be 'on the go' all the time. Several mentioned that it was 'OK for children to sit watching t.v. on a Sunday afternoon'. Inspectors were not at any time given the impression that demands on pupils were particularly onerous, although they do work very hard.

There is good provision in which boarders can do homework or private study. Older boarders use their bedrooms and few, if any, will be sharing with more than one other. Most boarders in their GCSE and A-level years will be in single rooms. Younger pupils do prep together in a designated 'prep room'. Mostly, prep is done in silence, but there are various rules, according to age, about whether music can be played, but where this is permitted personal headphones must be used. The boarders mentioned more than once that they appreciated teachers being on hand in the boarding houses as they could often assist with difficult academic problems. The mathematicians on duty in Cavell were often in demand, they said.

The unfenced pond has been mentioned above. All in all, the site was being maintained very safely and contractors had clearly cooperated with the school

authorities to try to reduce risks to a minimum. For instance, a worker walks in front of heavy plant or lorries moving around the site on the school roads. A good number of boarders mentioned that they spend time, especially during the light evenings and warm weather, playing outside. There are a number of areas where they can do this safely.

## **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 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)

### **The Commission considers Standards 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.**

### **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

**12, 19, 21, 30 and 36**

The quality in this outcome area is good. The staff generally respond to boarders in a very positive and supportive way. Boarders are equally positive about their relationship with the staff. The school is careful to ensure that the induction of new boarders is carried out in a way that is sensitive to their needs and results in new boarders feeling informed and welcomed. Boarders develop self-confidence and the ability to deal successfully with life's changes and challenges.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The majority of pupils who responded to the survey in October 2006 said that there are different ways that they can have a say about how they live at school. Only 75 seniors (representing 21% of those who responded) said that they only 'sometimes' or 'never' have the chance. However, perhaps not surprisingly, 45% of juniors (58) said they only 'sometimes' or 'never' have the chance.

All of the pupil discussion groups, consisting of boarders chosen by inspectors at random, mentioned the House Councils. Election to the House Council is

by ballot of the members of the boarding house and meetings take place every fortnight.

There is also a Food Committee to which the Head of Catering is invited. Boarders said that he brings food items to the meetings so that they can taste them. They liked this idea and appreciated his interest. It sounds like very good practice. As a result of a food questionnaire held last year, the college said it changed suppliers so that things like sausages have 85% meat content and no 'additives'. The matter of cooking pasta was looked into. The college now purchases a more expensive product, which means it does not go soggy so quickly. And, the vegetarian menu has been improved.

One older boarder mentioned being on the 'Principal's Council', which deals far more with issues across the school rather than in individual boarding houses. This meets weekly at times during the term. Students on this council often get to make decisions about how cash is spent. Other boarders said that they had been asked about items of furniture for the houses. One Head of House said that students had made a decision to buy an 'air hockey' table, which now gets very little use, but 'they had to learn by their mistakes'. In Fry, The Head of House has just introduced a Suggestion Box.

Boarders can opt for certain activities both on site and outside. Sometimes these are free and some incur a cost. Inclusion is by individual choice.

Yr.7 boarders said that the first weekend of the year is 'closed'. This means no boarder goes home. They are not allowed 'mobiles' for the first three weeks. House staff said telephone contact with families could be made using the house phone or either of two office telephones. In this way, there was not a problem. They would rather know that a youngster was homesick and this might not be possible, they said, if he or she 'is weeping into a mobile in a corner of the courtyard'. In a personal interview, the Head of House supported this view and seemed reluctant to consider changes. The boarders had a very different view. They said that in the first three weeks the queues for the house phone were 'very long indeed' and it was sometimes impossible to speak to families before it was time to go to bed. They said that the office phones could only be used in the direst emergency. After the first three weeks, when there is an exeat, the youngest boarders can have a mobile and the problem reduces considerably. **The school should consider making some different arrangements so that Yr.7 boarders can have easy telephone contact with their families in the first three weeks of the year.**

A very impressive induction scheme is available to children intending to board at Wymondham College. In discussion groups the youngest children said that they had a chance to stay overnight at the school in the summer term preceding their admission. They had the opportunity to take part in some activities and to spend the night in a dorm to give them a flavour of

what boarding was like. This usually takes place in the last two weeks of term when Peel is empty. It dovetails well with vacant spaces in other boarding houses when older students are doing exams. There is a Guide for Parents, students and visitors and all pupils have a journal and termly diary/pocket book with information about the school. At the additional visit in November 2005 some young boarders said that they had seen the College web site.

The discussions with house staff revealed that in many cases only 20-30% of boarders remain at weekends. Most, then, go home where they will have increased access to their local community and other facilities. Each boarding house does have daily newspaper(s), but these do not include the 'redtop' tabloids. No magazines are delivered, although students might bring them from home. Each boarding house has at least one television set, but access to news and 'soaps' will only be at times when boarders are not doing prep. The boarders said in their survey returns that shopping trips to the city and other places are arranged. Some boarders in a discussion group mentioned that they would like to have more shopping trips at weekends. This is something that the college authorities might wish to consider. The boarders also said that they do get involved in activities off site such as ice skating and paint-balling.

The house staff are clear about who is the Head of Boarding at the moment. Mr Boorman showed an impressive degree of background knowledge about boarders from all year groups and about everyday life in the boarding houses. One staff member felt that Heads of Houses have 'too much influence'. They are all, in fact, part of the college's 'Leadership Group' that meets regularly. It was somewhat surprising that each house staff group only meets together formally as a body once a term.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## 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)
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 51)

## The Commission considers Standard 51 the key standard to be inspected.

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

20, 40, 42, 44, 45, 50 and **51**

The quality in this outcome area is good. The school provides a good standard of accommodation for its boarders. It is in most places comfortable, well heated and lit. There is an efficient standard of maintenance and cleanliness. Boarders' space can be personalised. Privacy is promoted well and toilet and washing facilities are of a good standard.

## EVIDENCE:

Each boarder has a lockable safe, accessed using a digital code. There is a master key system to override the code if the student either forgets, the battery fails or, in extremis, a search of personal space has to be made. The arrangements for dividing large dorms into areas that boarders can call their own include wardrobes. The school's experience suggests that these can be half width with the other half being shelf space and inspectors were told that it is this model that will be used in future. Only one boarder mentioned 'lack of hanging space' and observation during house tours did not suggest that this is a problem. The divided areas are termed 'piggie pens' by boarders. They saw the point of them and agreed that they provide personal space, but they said that they do not give increased privacy, as the partitions are too low for that. It was the inspectors' view that the acceptance of the personal spaces in dorms will increase over time when the current generation of

boarders, who may have known the dorms when they 'open', will have moved on.

The boarders were asked to identify any areas that they felt were poorly decorated or unsafe. They felt that decoration was quite good and observation supported this view. But, some areas are quite bland and 'unhomely' in character. House staff acknowledged this and said that in some cases this was deliberate, but in other cases steps were being taken to redress the balance, say between 'sides' in boarding houses. The presence of lockers did nothing to dispel the 'utilitarian' purpose of some communal spaces downstairs. Repairs and maintenance appear to take place quickly and staff were observed in these tasks during the 3-day visit. One group said that things get repaired very quickly indeed – almost before you know it, but others said that 'you have to wait ages for things to get done'. The overall impression, however, is that the maintenance staff are on top of their job and work as fast as possible. The cycle of redecoration is every 6 years, to correspond to the number of boarding houses. However, money has been spent outside this cycle to refurbish showers, purchase new furniture and fittings and improve the facilities.

One or two children said that the beds were uncomfortable, but this did not seem to be a widespread problem. The Head of House was asked to look into the matter of a broken mattress in Peel. Boarders reported that their efforts to get something done had not resolved things. The boarders said that they could bring their own duvets and covers. They did mention that the dorms could be quite cold at times and the old-style, metal frame windows would not do anything to improve the cosiness of these areas. The school is attempting to install double-glazing on a phased basis. Bedding is regularly laundered and boarders have only to ask Matrons for fresh supplies.

The boarders did not report any problems with showers, although one group said that there could be queues at times, but this didn't happen often. There is always enough hot water, but sometimes it could be temperamental and linked to what taps were on elsewhere in the house. Privacy in showers was not said by boarders to be compromised in any way. House staff said that they are not expected to supervise boarders through showers or 'tick them off any list'. Personal hygiene issues are dealt with on a case-by-case basis if required.

During the house and school 'tours' guides said that students usually change for sports in boarding houses rather than in the sports hall. This applied more, perhaps, to the girls than to the boys. There seem to be few, if any, problems about lack of changing space.

The college has a Tuck Shop where items other than sweets etc can also be bought. These include stationery.

# Management

## 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 effectively managed.(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 adequately supervised 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 with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training.(NMS 34)
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice.(NMS 35)
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

**The Commission considers Standards 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

**1, 8, 9, 10, 23, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35**

The quality in this outcome area is excellent. There is clear management and leadership of boarding in the school. The management of the boarding provision has a high profile with very clear lines of communication and accountability. House staff are trained, skilled and in sufficient numbers to provide a high quality service. The school ensures all new boarding staff receive thorough induction training and have clear job descriptions.

## **EVIDENCE:**

In November 2004 it was noted that all Heads of Houses (HoH) had agreed a common core to the House Guides. Individual Heads of Houses could make

minor alterations to reflect the individuality of their House. The guides were to be reviewed in the Summer term, ready for the new admissions in September 2005. At the additional visit in November 2005 a House Guide was provided and available to take away for later consideration when the 'common core' of information and the element of HoH's flexibility were both confirmed.

The Commission's inspectors were very impressed with the acting Head of Boarding who demonstrated extremely effective management abilities and organisational skills, pre-inspection and during the visit when some flexibility and rearrangements were needed at short notice. He is a real asset to the school.

There is a parent governor with special responsibility for boarding although he did say that he has soon to undertake some training to equip him with the skills and necessary insights. He intends to spend a 24-hour period in the school to observe practice.

Each boarding house appears to operate essentially the same way, with similar structures in place. Some house groups consisted of comparatively younger staff and others had a mixture including more experienced colleagues who had been in post for many years. Terms and conditions of employment for teachers are such that there is an expectation that they will undertake at least 10 hours per week 'boarding duties' in a house. They are paid accordingly. Staff who have been in post for some years do have the chance to opt out and some have done so. But, the general feedback was that the teachers who do shifts in boarding houses really do enjoy it. They mentioned having an improved relationship with pupils, with both seeing the other group in a different light. They are aware of, and said they take steps to ensure, any difference of opinion in the classroom is not carried over to the pastoral scene.

House Logs showed that there had been a spate of water leaks recently in one house. These had been satisfactorily dealt with.

Each boarding house is laid out essentially the same as the others. Provision varies slightly, but, again, is similar. There were some differences, say in the number of televisions, whether the house had a DVD player or not, the quality or newness of the furniture, the way in which parts of the house were used and the games that were available. But essentially, there are no major discrepancies in boarding provision. Boys' 'sides' are the same as girls' 'sides' Lincoln was physically a little different in that some internal alterations had been made to provide more double and single accommodation for boarders. Here, there are no multi-occupancy dorms. The oldest boarders also had more computers in-house to reflect their additional workload and the fact that they could do private study in the boarding house.

The four main houses are 'vertically structured'. That is to say they house Yrs 8 to 12 inclusive. This is to change shortly when the new buildings come on stream and allow Yr.12's to move out into their own accommodation. The house staff were divided in their opinion as to whether this is a good thing. They see older pupils in many ways having a positive effect on younger ones. All of the younger years, however, said that older boarders 'dominate the houses'. This extended in some cases to deciding what was on the television and sitting in the best seats. 'Older pupils' were mentioned by a small percentage of boarders, both junior and senior, as people they would go to if they had a problem. The HoH in New Hall was very positive about the vertically structured boarding houses citing 'good peer pressure' as one advantage.

The boarders in the discussion groups comprising Yrs. 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 did not feel that there was a problem with different age group sharing showering facilities as pupils go to bed at different times. The 'window' that each age group has is quite narrow (quarter hours between each year group going to bed), but boarders did not raise lack of privacy as an issue and when questioned they did not see it as concerning.

The acting Principal is aware of the concentration of sanctions in Cavell and has noted the apparent discrepancy between numbers of sanctions given there and elsewhere.

Staffing is comparatively high in boarding houses. This is especially so in the evenings, less so in the mornings. Matrons play a significant part in staffing the houses and are, with Heads and deputy Heads of Houses, most consistently on shift. 'Resident' and non-resident teachers of both genders all do additional duties in boarding houses at times during the week. Staff confirmed that it is unusual for there not to be six adults sleeping in each boarding house on weekdays, and on most weekends when the school is open. The boarders confirmed that they know who is on duty at night and can raise an adult if, say, they feel unwell in the early hours of the morning. There are bells straight into the accommodation of staff on duty during the night. Staffing complement does not change on weekends when there could be only 20-30% boarders in residence.

The Commission feels that staffing levels are good – 6 people sleeping in and staff always on duty. This does of course have its downside for house staff who, it is acknowledged, work very long hours. In one boarding house the staff were supportive of an arrangement whereby individuals could be 'stood down' if numbers allowed. The Commission would certainly support a reduction in hours for newly qualified staff where this was possible – say at weekends when there are fewer boarders staying or at times in the day when numbers are down.

The boarders said that they liked having staff on duty who could help them with things like schoolwork. They identified matrons, staff and teachers, the HoH and Deputy HoH and form tutors, all of whom would at times be on duty in boarding houses, as people they could go to if they had a problem.

Each house has a 'signing out' procedure. In this way, staff can know which boarders are in the house and which have gone out for some reason. In Lincoln this arrangement was somewhat arbitrary and students said that sometimes they don't bother. In none of the house staff groups interviewed did anybody recall a boarder deliberately going missing.

The school management said that GAP students are never left alone with groups of children, but boarders said that this sometimes happened, say if they go to the park.

Job descriptions were seen on the personal files of four staff selected at random. There was also evidence of an assessment of their competence in the first six months. Admittedly, this was confined to their teaching.

Several staff confirmed that they had taken advantage of training courses laid on by the Boarding School Association (BSA). They felt these had improved markedly in recent years and were well worth attending. Sometimes staff are allowed to attend in term time.

The house staff had a good understanding of the boarding role. There is a Staff Handbook in hard copy form and an electronic version is also available. It sets out in quite good detail the boarding task and an individual's responsibilities. Every staff member recently new in post confirmed that they had a good induction. This included the opportunity to stay overnight in the term previous to them taking up their appointment. Each said that they had child protection training and in discussion with the house groups it was clear that they were confident of responding appropriately if a child wanted to 'tell them a secret', sometimes a prelude to a personal disclosure. They mentioned having a 'mentor' and in at least one case this arrangement included being from the same academic discipline and working the same shift, which seemed like good practice. In another case, the mentor was the Head of House.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

“N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>6</b>	3
<b>7</b>	3
<b>15</b>	2
<b>16</b>	3
<b>17</b>	3
<b>24</b>	3
<b>25</b>	3
<b>48</b>	4
<b>49</b>	4

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	3
<b>3</b>	3
<b>4</b>	2
<b>5</b>	2
<b>13</b>	N/a
<b>22</b>	N/a
<b>26</b>	3
<b>28</b>	N/a
<b>29</b>	3
<b>37</b>	3
<b>38</b>	2
<b>39</b>	3
<b>41</b>	4
<b>47</b>	2

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>11</b>	4
<b>14</b>	3
<b>18</b>	4
<b>27</b>	4
<b>43</b>	4
<b>46</b>	4

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	4
<b>19</b>	2
<b>21</b>	4
<b>30</b>	3
<b>36</b>	3

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>20</b>	3
<b>40</b>	3
<b>42</b>	3
<b>44</b>	4
<b>45</b>	3
<b>50</b>	3
<b>51</b>	N/a

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

## Continued

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
<b><i>Standard No</i></b>	<b><i>Score</i></b>
<b>1</b>	4
<b>8</b>	4
<b>9</b>	3
<b>10</b>	3
<b>23</b>	3
<b>31</b>	4
<b>32</b>	3
<b>33</b>	4
<b>34</b>	4
<b>35</b>	3
<b>52</b>	4

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? Yes

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	BS15	The procedures in boarding houses relating to the monitoring of medication administration Records (MAR) sheets by Medical Centre staff should be more robust.	31/12/06
2.	BS15	The college should consider introducing protocols for medications brought in from home by boarders for administration by house staff.	31/12/06
3.	BS16	The staff at the Medical Centre should endeavour to ask students <u>every time</u> if they want to see the doctor alone or if they want somebody else to be present.	
4.	BS17	The college should consider developing and introducing the use of 'welfare plans' for pupils who have particular welfare needs, who are identified as potentially vulnerable or isolated. These would provide house staff with information about the identified, or potential, problem, and give a plan of action and support to be followed. Welfare plans should be regularly reviewed to assess the success of the intended actions.	31/12/06
5.	BS3	The college should consider introducing a 'whistle blowing' policy and procedures for staff.	
6.	BS4	The college should consider basic training for staff in physical restraint techniques. These would likely focus more on diversion and distraction than on actual holding moves,	

		although these, too, are important in some circumstances. Various training packages are available, including programmes with names such as 'School Safe' and 'Unisafe'.	
7.	BS5	The school should ensure that every boarding house has, and maintains, a Complaints Log.	
8.	BS37	The college should ensure that all house staff follow appropriate guidance on privacy issues for boarders. These include knocking and waiting before entering bedrooms.	
9.	BS38	No staff member should start work before a satisfactory Enhanced CRB disclosure has been obtained for him or her.	31/12/06
10.	BS38	Wherever practicable, previous employers should be contacted where the post has involved work with vulnerable adults or children. This is to ascertain the reason the applicant left the previous job(s).	
11.	BS47	Consideration should be given to improving safety around the campus, where this is felt to be needed. For example, the road outside the Medical Centre is an example where lighting is very poor at present. Also, consideration should be given to fencing the pond.	31/12/06
12.	BS19	The College authorities may wish to consider again whether, in the light of the youngest pupils' further comments, the current provision of pay phones is adequate, especially in the first 3 weeks of the academic year. Equally, consideration could be given to allowing Yr.7 boarders to have mobiles from the beginning of term.	
13.	BS36	The college should consider further training for one Matron in particular whose practice was said by a number of boarders to be insensitive and overly prescriptive at times.	31/12/06

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