



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LEWESTON SCHOOL

BOARDING WELFARE INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Leweston School
DfE Number	835/6025
Registered Charity Number	295175
Address	Leweston School Leweston Sherborne Dorset DT9 6EN
Telephone Number	01963 210691
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Email Address	admin@leweston.dorset.sch.uk
Head	Mr Adrian Aylward
Chair of Governors	Mr Andrew May
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	232
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 137
Number of Boarders	Total: 95
	Full: 68 Weekly: 27
Inspection dates	31 Jan 2012 to 02 Feb 2012

PREFACE

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

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) (England) Regulations 2010. From September 2011 the inspection of boarding welfare forms part of the inspection process. 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. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in November 2008 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding 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.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with boarders, held discussions with senior members of staff and with a governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, 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

Mr Alan Sturrock

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Assistant Head,
SHMIS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Leweston School is a Roman Catholic boarding and day school for pupils aged from 2 to 18, originally founded in 1891 by the Congregation of the Religious Instruction as a junior school for girls and boys in Sherborne. The senior school, which is for girls aged 11 to 18, moved in 1947 to a large parkland site a short distance from the town, where it remains. The preparatory school moved to this site in 1993 and the schools share facilities, including boarding facilities and some staff. The schools have a single governing body, some members of which are appointed by the Catholic Diocese of Plymouth. The current director of boarding was appointed in 2011.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a contemporary education rooted in the Catholic tradition. Its motto 'Gaudere et bene facere' means 'Rejoice and do well' and encapsulates the school's intention to offer an academic education in a happy, stimulating environment which encourages pupils to grow into well-balanced young adults who can take their place confidently in society. The school intends its boarding environment to inspire a sense of the value of each individual. It seeks to create a supportive community within which each pupil is healthy and safe, and where all learn to make a positive contribution both within the school community and in the wider world.
- 1.3 Currently, there are 137 day pupils and 95 boarders in the senior school; 68 are full boarders and 27 board weekly. Of the 61 pupils in the sixth form, 35 board. In addition, a number of day pupils regularly board on a flexible basis. The majority of British boarders live within an hour's drive of the school. Just over half of boarders come from overseas, mostly from Central America, Europe and the Far East. Specialist support is provided for 56 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and for 39 pupils with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There is no pupil with a statement of special educational needs. Pupils may choose from a range of boarding options: full, weekly or flexi-boarding. Boarding is arranged into three houses: the junior house for pupils in Years 3 to 8, the middle house for those in Years 9 to 11 and the senior house for those in the sixth form. Each house has a housemistress in charge, supported by a team of assistant housemistresses and domestic staff, and two Gap Year students help in the running of the junior and middle houses. All boarding accommodation is located within the main school building.
- 1.4 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 2011.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that on all occasions staff are accommodated in rooms that are not otherwise available to pupils. [NMS 5]
2. Ensure that there is clear signage of all fire exit routes, including in the boarding houses. [NMS 7]
3. Ensure that governors are sufficiently familiar with the National Minimum Standards (NMS) to support their oversight of the boarding life of the school. [NMS 13]

(iii) Progress since the last inspection

2.3 The previous report, from an inspection undertaken by Ofsted, made nine recommendations: five concerned with recording procedures, two with staff training and review, one with the quality of suppers and one with fire safety. The school has addressed all of these, as indicated in the text of the report.

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 Pupils say the handbooks provided as part of their induction are most helpful. Currently there is no formal system for establishing peer support for new pupils joining after Year 7. The school is consulting with the pupils to create a support system for pupils from overseas and for those joining at different points. Boarders can identify several people to whom they can turn for personal help and guidance. These individuals now include an independent listener. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has appropriate policies for first aid and the care of any pupils with chronic conditions. The health centre is run by qualified nurses. It is separate from boarding accommodation. Each boarding house has a suitable room for pupils who feel unwell during the night. Appointments with doctors, opticians or dentists are arranged if necessary. There are clear procedures for the administration of medicines, and a comprehensive record is now kept of all medicines and household remedies dispensed to pupils, as recommended in the previous report. The pupils' competence is assessed before they are allowed to self-medicate. Care is taken to respect the confidentiality of boarders. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Most pupils have mobile telephones, which enables them to contact their parents easily. There are suitably private landline telephones available, and pupils have access to computers, allowing use of email. An internet telephone and video calling service is being trialled at the school to provide another form of communication. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Lighting, ventilation and heating are appropriate. Boarding accommodation is clean and well maintained, and access is suitably restricted. All houses have sufficient numbers of private toilet and washing facilities. Some have recently been refurbished and the school has plans to update the remainder. Dormitories are suitably furnished and personalised by the pupils. Study facilities are appropriate. In the junior house, a staff member sleeps in the room otherwise designated as a rest room for pupils on two evenings a week. This means that there is not always a clear separation of staff and pupil accommodation. Security patrols and use of CCTV cameras do not intrude on the pupils' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Kitchens are hygienic. The food is nutritious and suitable for the needs of all. Pupils say that suppers have improved considerably over the last two years, in response to the previous report. Pupils in the middle and senior houses have means of preparing snacks and hot drinks in the evening. This is not available for the senior school pupils in the junior house. Pupils have access to drinking water throughout the day. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry provision is satisfactory and items rarely go missing. The school shop provides necessary personal and stationery items. Pupils have lockers in which to keep their possessions safe. Housemistresses store large amounts of money or passports for the girls. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders have a range and choice of activities available to them outside the formal day. There is a programme of weekend outings. The extensive grounds allow for many recreational areas, with age-appropriate boundaries set. Sixth-form pupils

may go to the local town in the early evening. Newspapers, magazines and news television programmes ensure that the pupils have access to information about the wider world. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 Health and safety policies are compliant. Risk assessments, updated annually, are suitably maintained as recommended in the previous report. A single accident log is kept and reviewed termly, and any issues arising are recorded and remedied. The pupils say that they feel protected and that their welfare is promoted. The grounds and buildings are well maintained and safe. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 There are regular fire drills, including at night time. Records are kept of the maintenance and testing of the alarm system and of equipment checks. All fire exits are clear of obstructions as recommended in the previous report. In some areas fire signage for exits is inadequate. Governors are committed to their role but have limited understanding of the NMS to support their oversight of the school's compliance with legal requirements. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Safeguarding procedures are understood by all staff. Safeguarding training is carried out appropriately for all staff, including the security guards, as recommended in the previous report, and also for pupils in Year 13. Records of training and of any concerns are maintained as required. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The pupils clearly respect each other and others' belongings. There are very few incidents of bullying. Pupils understand and respect school rules. Staff work to nurture positive behaviour. Any disagreements are managed with sensitivity to all involved. Any sanctions given are recorded, signed and monitored, as recommended in the previous report. Policies on the use of restraint and searching are in place. Registers are appropriately maintained. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school operates safe recruitment procedures. Policies are correctly implemented and all staff and those residents not employed by the school are subject to legally required checks. There is an appropriate written agreement between residents other than employees and the school. All visitors to the school are accompanied during their stay and are handed a safeguarding leaflet when signing into the school. Parents of pupils from overseas are required to appoint guardians. [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 Clear statements of boarding principles are available for all staff and parents. These principles underpin the everyday operation of the school. The value placed on all individuals is evident in policies and in practice. [NMS1]
- 3.17 There are effective links between academic and resident staff, including a fortnightly meeting between house staff and academic heads of year. Boarding practice is clearly managed. Boarding staff are well trained, some having undertaken formal qualifications in boarding and others being experienced. All necessary records are maintained and monitored by the school. [NMS 13]

- 3.18 All resident staff have job descriptions reflecting their duties. There is a formal appraisal system which identifies training needs, as recommended in the previous report. An induction programme ensures that staff understand boarding principles and procedures. The boarding practice of all resident staff is monitored. The roles of residents not employed by the school are made clear. Supervision outside teaching time is adequate and boarders are at all times under the charge of a suitable adult. Procedures to ensure that staff know the whereabouts of boarders are in place and staff know what to do should a boarder go missing. There is always at least one responsible adult resident in each boarding house at night. Pupils said that they have no difficulty in finding an adult during the night to help them if necessary. Access to staff accommodation by pupils is suitably supervised. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Pupils do not suffer discrimination on any grounds. Boarders with EAL or SEND are provided with extra specialist support in the houses on two evenings a week. Minutes of meetings show the house staff's sensitivity to the different needs of their charges. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Formal means such as the school council and the boarding council allow the pupils to contribute their opinions on school life. Pupils' comments are taken seriously and are usually acted upon swiftly. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school's complaints policy meets all requirements. The log of complaints and their outcomes are now appropriately monitored by the senior leadership team. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The duties and responsibilities of school prefects are appropriate. Prefects do not have the authority to impose sanctions. Their roles are clearly defined and a member of staff is allocated to oversee each prefect. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not use long-stay lodgings. [NMS 20]