



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LEWESTON JUNIOR DEPARTMENT

BOARDING WELFARE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Leweston Junior Department

The Senior School and Early Years Foundation Stage were inspected at the same time and separate reports published.

Full Name of School	Leweston Junior Department
DfE Number	835/6008
Registered Charity Number	295175
Address	Leweston Junior Department Leweston Sherborne Dorset DT9 6EN
Telephone Number	01963 210790
Fax Number	01963 210648
Email Address	enquiries@leweston.dorset.sch.uk
Head	Mr Adrian Aylward
Chair of Governors	Mrs Mary Head
Age Range	3 months to 11 years
Total Number of Pupils	76
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (24 boys; 52 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 20 5-11: 45 3-5 (EYFS): 11
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 70
Number of Boarders	Total: 6 Full: 4 Weekly: 2
Inspection Dates	10 Feb 2015 to 12 Feb 2015

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with boarders, held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and the governor responsible for boarding, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited the boarding house 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 Sue Bennett

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Anne Haas

Team Inspector for Boarding (Headmistress, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Leweston Junior Department is a day school for boys and girls between the ages of three months and eleven years. Additionally, it provides boarding for girls from the ages of seven to eleven within a junior boarding house. The school is situated in a rural location on the outskirts of Sherborne in Dorset. Founded in 1891 by the Sisters of Christian Instruction, the school is a Catholic foundation, whilst welcoming pupils of all faiths. The board of governors of Leweston Senior School also takes full responsibility for the oversight of the Junior Department and one board member has delegated oversight of the boarding provision.
- 1.2 The Junior Department aims to provide a contemporary education rooted in the Catholic tradition. It seeks to inspire each pupil with a sense of the value of each individual, within the context of community living and the education of the whole person. It aspires to create a supportive ethos, within which all pupils are healthy and safe, and where they learn to make a positive contribution to the community and in the wider world. It aims for boarding to be an integral part of school life and to prepare pupils for the future.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, Leweston Junior Department, formally Leweston Prep School, amalgamated with Leweston Senior School in 2014, although it retains its independence as a registered educational provider. Both the Senior School and Junior Department share the facilities on the campus. Additionally, a new common room area has been established for junior boarders, pastoral care systems have been amended, and the balance of the school day and the programme of extra-curricular activities has been reviewed to meet boarders' needs more effectively.
- 1.4 A total of 76 pupils, 24 boys and 52 girls, are at the school, of whom 6 are boarders on either a full, weekly or flexible basis. There are 31 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Of the 16 pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) 12 receive specialist support for their learning, none of whom have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- 1.5 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 2013.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Develop further the procedures that support boarders with welfare plans to present a cohesive approach across the school.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in January to February 2012. The recommendation raised at the inspection has been appropriately addressed. A new common room area has been established within the house and provides age-appropriate facilities.

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 New boarders participate in an induction process that includes a taster day, a welcome handbook and the appointment of a 'guardian angel'. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority of boarders expressed concerns regarding their understanding of support channels. Inspection evidence does not concur. Boarders overwhelmingly reported that they speak to house staff when they need advice. They understand that they have a choice of people to turn to outside the school, including external helplines; contact details, including for the Children's Commissioner, are displayed on house notice boards. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has appropriate policies and procedures to care for boarders who are unwell or injure themselves. Suitably qualified medical staff, supported by local doctors, run the well-equipped health centre, which has suitable facilities for the treatment of accidents and illnesses. Overnight accommodation, including toilet and washing facilities, is available when necessary. Boarders have access to external specialists, such as the dentist, should the need arise. House staff are appropriately trained to administer household remedies and medicines to the boarders for whom they are prescribed. Boarders with specific medical conditions are able to self-medicate if deemed competent to do so. Medicines are securely stored. Suitable records are kept of accidents, treatment and medication. The confidentiality and rights of boarders as patients are appropriately respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders can easily contact their parents, other family members and friends at appropriate times using their own mobile telephones, a private house telephone, email or video conference calls. The school has suitable systems to ensure the safe use of electronic communications by boarders, in accordance with its established policies and procedures. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation is suitably furnished, and appropriately lit, heated and ventilated. It is comfortable and suitable for the ages, needs and number of boarders. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been met. Boarders have an age-appropriate common room, and commented that they enjoy this relaxing space and the suitable range of resources provided. Bedding is clean and warm. Boarders who are unable to complete their homework during prep sessions can do so within the boarding house. Bathrooms are clean and afford appropriate privacy. Boarders can personalise their sleeping and work spaces with pictures and photographs. The accommodation is for the sole use of the boarders during term time. Surveillance equipment contributes to boarders' security but it does not compromise their privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Boarders, including those with dietary needs, are provided with healthy, varied and nutritious meals, served in an easily accessible dining room. A small minority of pupils criticised the food in their questionnaire responses, although the majority reported that the food is good, with plenty of choice. Inspection evidence supported these views. Boarders are encouraged to offer suggestions for menus. Facilities for the preparation, serving and consumption of food are clean and hygienic. Boarders have access to drinking water and fruit in the house at all times. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Clean personal laundry is provided daily and bedding changed weekly. All are suitably stored and issued to the correct boarder. Additional personal items or stationery are either supplied by boarding staff or acquired from the school shop.

Each boarder has secure provision for private possessions. House staff look after boarders' valuable items, such as money and passports. Boarders are confident that their belongings are safe. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 Boarders can access a range of age-appropriate activities, both during and at the end of the school day. They enjoy a varied programme of outings at weekends. Boarders have sufficient leisure and relaxation time, both indoors and outside. They have safe places to be alone if they wish. There are no onerous or unusual demands placed on the boarders. Age-appropriate newspapers, television and the internet enable boarders' access to information about news and events in the outside world. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 A range of policies and procedures promotes boarders' health and safety. Documents are regularly reviewed and approved by senior leaders. All areas throughout the school are well maintained and any concerns are promptly addressed. Risk assessments, for both on and off-site activities, demonstrate the school's focus on boarders' welfare at all times. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire. Emergency evacuation drills take place at least once each term, including during boarding time, ensuring that boarders clearly understand the procedures. Records are appropriately recorded and monitored, and equipment regularly tested and maintained. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Arrangements for safeguarding are rigorous. The recently updated child protection policy now has appropriate regard to official guidance. All staff receive regular update training, which reflects the current guidance for keeping children safe. The designated lead for safeguarding has appropriate levels of training in line with local authority procedures and effective links with the local safeguarding children board for further support and guidance when required. The governing body suitably discharges its safeguarding responsibilities. The annual review of the arrangements provides appropriate levels of scrutiny and is carefully recorded. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school implements suitable policies to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying. Boarders and their parents have recently attended workshops to promote their awareness of electronic safety. Boarders have a clear understanding of the rules and comment that sanctions and rewards are fairly administered. They report that instances of bullying are rare and are confident that staff would deal with any occurrences quickly and thoroughly. There are appropriate policies for the use of physical restraint and searching of pupils' possessions, which are well understood by staff and boarders. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school operates stringent safer recruitment procedures for the appointment of staff, volunteers and governors. The accurate single central register of appointments is appropriately maintained and monitored by senior leaders. All adults who live on site are employed by the school and suitable checks undertaken. Suitable systems are in place to check and supervise visitors, ensuring that they do not have unsupervised access to boarders or their accommodation. The school does not appoint guardians for the boarders. [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 A statement of boarding principles is displayed on notice boards and included in handbooks for boarders, their parents and the staff. Inspection findings confirm that boarding practice is clearly in line with the published aims and ethos. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The leadership and management demonstrate a clear commitment to boarding practice. Development planning presents a focused evaluation of the provision. There are close links between the academic and residential staff; pastoral care meetings ensure that boarders' needs are prioritised and supported accordingly. House staff are appropriately experienced and trained for their respective roles, to ensure their suitability to work in boarding provision. The senior management regularly scrutinises boarding records to ensure that they are suitably maintained. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, parents were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the boarding provision. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Job descriptions for staff are clearly defined and closely reflect their duties and responsibilities. Induction procedures ensure that new staff receive appropriate levels of support and guidance. Regular practice reviews provide staff with opportunities to further their professional development. Boarders are well supervised at all times by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Duty rotas are displayed in the houses and boarders are fully aware of who is responsible for them. Registration systems, such as books for signing in and out, ensure that staff are fully aware of boarders' whereabouts. Staff have a clear understanding of the procedure to follow in the event of a missing boarder. There is always at least one member of boarding staff sleeping on site overnight, in appropriately separated accommodation. Boarders report that it is easy to contact house staff during the night if the need arises. Their access to staff accommodation is appropriately supervised. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders with SEND are provided with suitable levels of support. Welfare plans are regularly reviewed during pastoral meetings and updated accordingly. However, the documents lack information about parental involvement and a clear indication of monitoring by senior management in order to enable a consistent approach between the Senior School and Junior Department. Boarders come from a range of cultural backgrounds. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and during inspection discussions, boarders felt that they are equally treated and that there is no inappropriate discrimination. [NMS16]
- 3.20 Systems such as the boarding council enable boarders to express their views and concerns. During discussions, boarders commented that their opinions are appropriately considered by senior staff and that they are not penalised for raising any matter in good faith. For example, the evening commitments have been reviewed to provide boarders with more relaxation time in the house. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The complaints procedure is available for parents, both on the website and from the school office, and clearly sets out the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns. Inspectors found that the few complaints received had been handled appropriately. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority of boarders felt that there is little opportunity for responsibility. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Boarders are expected to contribute to the house community with equal

responsibility and take turns with duties such as the table cleaning rota at supper time. The boarding captain and other boarders with defined responsibilities, such as year group representatives, have a clear understanding of their commitment and are appropriately supervised to prevent any possible abuses of their roles. [NMS 19]

- 3.23 The Junior Department boarding provision does not use any long-stay lodgings. [NMS 20]