



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**HARROGATE LADIES' COLLEGE**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Harrogate Ladies' College

Full Name of School	<b>Harrogate Ladies' College</b>			
DfE Number	<b>815/6012</b>			
Registered Charity Number	<b>529579</b>			
Address	<b>Harrogate Ladies' College Clarence Drive Harrogate North Yorkshire HG1 2QG</b>			
Telephone Number	<b>01423 504543</b>			
Fax Number	<b>01423 568893</b>			
Email Address	<b>enquire@hlc.org.uk</b>			
Principal	<b>Mrs Sylvia Brett</b>			
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Sarah Pullan</b>			
Age Range	<b>2 to 19</b>			
Total Number of Pupils	<b>634</b>			
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (122 boys; 512 girls)</b>			
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>21</b>	5-11:	<b>213</b>
	2-5 (EYFS):	<b>63</b>	11-18:	<b>337</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>482</b>		
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>152</b>		
	Full:	<b>150</b>	Flexi:	<b>2</b>
Inspection dates	<b>15 Jan 2014 to 17 Jan 2014</b>			

## 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) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. 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 January 2010 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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, 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

Mrs Louise North

Mr Karl Wilding

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)

Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Harrogate Ladies' College is a family of three schools for pupils aged two to eighteen. Originally founded as a girls' school in 1893, it has occupied its present site in Harrogate since 1904. The school is in three sections on the same campus. Bankfield, opened in 1995, caters for boys and girls between two and four years of age while Highfield is a co-educational preparatory day school for pupils between four and eleven and was opened in 2000. The school's senior section, known as College, provides day and boarding education for girls aged 11 to 19. The school is a registered charity. All three parts of the school are overseen by the same governing body and are led by the principal, although Bankfield and Highfield have their own headmistresses.
- 1.2 The school aims to inspire and nurture pupils so as to engender in them a deep passion for learning and a love of life. The school, a Christian foundation, intends that all its pupils will be challenged to be the best that they can be and to develop the academic and personal qualities needed to make the most of life. The school aims to provide boarders with a safe and happy environment where every pupil can feel comfortable and accepted; all are encouraged to discover and reach their full potential. It seeks to provide opportunities for leadership and teamwork and to encourage every girl to develop confidence, self awareness and sensitivity to the needs of others.
- 1.3 Currently there are 630 pupils enrolled at the school, with 337 girls in the College of whom 142 are in the sixth form; 152 pupils are boarders, of whom 136 come from overseas, mainly from China, Thailand, Russia and Germany.
- 1.4 The college has five boarding houses, most catering for a range of age groups. Lincoln, the largest house, has pupils from Year 8 to 12. Lancaster provides for pupils in Years 7 to 12 and Clarence for pupils between Years 9 and 12. Tower and its annex, Armaclare, cater for pupils in Year 13. All houses are on the main school site, with the exception of Tower which is a short walk away.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection, the senior management of the school has changed with the appointment of a new deputy head pastoral in 2012, who took on responsibility for boarding in September 2013 when the principal took up her post. There have also been staff changes in the boarding houses.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

**Early Years Foundation Stage setting.**

School	NC name
Minors 2-3	EYFS Under 3
Majors 3-4	EYFS Nursery
Upstairs Majors	EYFS Nursery
Reception	EYFS Reception

**Preparatory Department .**

School	NC name
Prep 1	Year 1
Prep 2	Year 2
Prep 3	Year 3
Prep 4	Year 4
Prep 5	Year 5
Prep 6	Year 6

**Senior School.**

School	NC name
Upper 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Year 7
Lower 4 <sup>th</sup>	Year 8
Upper 4 <sup>th</sup>	Year 9
Lower 5 <sup>th</sup>	Year 10
Upper 5 <sup>th</sup>	Year 11
Lower 6 <sup>th</sup>	Year 12
Upper 6 <sup>th</sup>	Year 13

## **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. Implement the newly devised arrangements for the induction of boarding staff and appraisal of their boarding practice.
2. Ensure that house self-reviews reflect a thorough understanding of the NMS and that house development plans are incorporated into whole school planning.
3. Ensure that there are appropriate expectations of senior boarding staff so that initiatives can be implemented and responsibilities suitably delegated.

### **(iii) Progress since the previous inspection**

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in January 2010. It recommended a review of the food provided at supper for boarders, improvements in systems for recording safe recruitment procedures and that staff supervision levels in one house should be improved. Each of these recommendations has been met by the school.



### **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 Effective induction processes, including house handbooks and older boarders acting as mentors, help new boarders to settle in on arrival. Boarders said that staff are readily available to help with concerns and named a range of people to whom they can turn. Telephone numbers for staff and appropriate helplines, including the Children's Rights Director and the independent listener, are displayed in houses. [NMS 2].
- 3.3 Comprehensive medical policies and procedures are in place. Boarding staff are trained in first aid. A suitably equipped health centre, staffed by qualified nurses, provides houses with 24-hour support. Access to local medical services is readily available. The administration of prescription and non-prescription medication is properly controlled and recorded. The suitability of boarders to self-medicate is assessed. Boarders' rights to medical confidentiality are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders can readily contact family and friends via telephone, email and the internet. The college has appropriate procedures to ensure safe internet use. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Houses provide suitable sleeping accommodation. House kitchen facilities, recreational and study spaces are suitable for boarders' needs. There are appropriate washing and toilet facilities, although the standard of provision for showering is inconsistent. Houses provide comfortably furnished, homely living environments which are well-ventilated, warm and clean. Boarders personalise their living spaces. Security measures are effective and do not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Boarders are offered a wide choice of good quality, appetising and nutritious meals, taking account of any special requirements. All food is cooked on the premises in clean, well-resourced kitchens. Although half the boarders responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said the food is not good, inspectors disagreed. The meals inspectors sampled, examination of menus, the college's responsiveness to pupil requests and pupils' comments in interview show that the college has taken effective action on Ofsted's recommendation. There is provision in houses for making evening or weekend snacks and drinking water is freely available. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry arrangements are efficient and clean clothes returned promptly. Boarders may store personal possessions or valuables in a secure locker or with their housemistress. Boarders are able to obtain personal and stationery items at school or in the town. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A suitable range of optional activities is available. Boarders welcome recent changes to the activity programme, although several boarders said they would like more unstructured time, particularly on Saturdays. Inspectors judged that the balance of structured activities and free time is appropriate. Suitable indoor and outdoor recreational spaces are available. Boarders have easy access to news and they can visit the town at times appropriate to their age. [NMS 10]

### **3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding**

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 A suitable written policy meets relevant health and safety legislation and is effectively implemented. Security arrangements and the maintenance of buildings, accommodation and facilities ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils is ensured as far as is reasonably practicable. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 There are satisfactory arrangements for eliminating preventable risk of fire. Equipment is tested appropriately and fire drills are carried out regularly, including at least once each term during times when the boarders are in bed. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of the boarders are managed correctly and meet requirements. There are several senior members of staff who have been suitably trained to a higher level in child protection matters. The school liaises with local agencies as necessary. All staff are given safeguarding training, both on starting work and at required intervals thereafter. Information about any concerns and the actions taken is stored confidentially as required. In pre-inspection questionnaires, parents and pupils alike confirmed that boarders feel safe and well looked after in their boarding houses. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 There is a suitable written policy to promote good behaviour which is well understood by all. Boarders understand the rules and respect them. Consequently, staff rarely need to impose sanctions. Boarders told inspectors that bullying is rare and that any unpleasant behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school has not had to implement its policies on restraint or searching of pupils. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Safe recruitment procedures are used efficiently to ensure that in appointing staff, governors and volunteers due regard is had to relevant guidance. Recording procedures have been improved to meet the recommendation of the last Ofsted report. All new staff are subject to the necessary checks and appropriate procedures for supervision are put in place should these not be complete before an individual starts work. All individuals over the age of 16 who are neither employees nor on the school roll have also been suitably checked and have signed written agreements specifying the terms of their accommodation. All visitors to the boarding houses are appropriately supervised. The school does not appoint guardians but provides guidance for those appointed by parents. [NMS 14]

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

- 3.15 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 The school has a suitable statement of boarding principles. In questionnaire responses parents were unanimous in their satisfaction with boarding provision and management. Pupils told inspectors that boarding helps them develop independence, tolerance and team-work. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 There is clear management and leadership of boarding. Recent changes in staffing means that the school is in a period of transition. There are many new systems under discussion but the multiple roles of senior staff mean that there has not been time to ensure their implementation or to review the expectations of housemistresses. Communication between the academic and pastoral teams is effective. The school has begun to centralise individual boarders' records. Although houses do not currently prepare individual development plans, the creation of an overall boarding development plan has begun and governors are committed to

supporting this aspect of the college's life. Boarding staff have appropriate levels of training and experience. All required records are maintained and monitored by senior staff. [NMS 13]

- 3.18 Boarding staff are given job descriptions and take part in a review of their work after their first term in post. Other induction and appraisal systems are currently informal. Opportunities for professional development are offered. The role of spouses is made clear. All boarders are supervised in the main school during the day and by qualified, experienced staff in the houses at other times. Regular roll calls, signing in and out procedures and rigorous security systems ensure that staff know the whereabouts of boarders at all times. Staff understand the missing child policy and how to implement it. There is always at least one member of duty staff sleeping in each house at night, easily contactable by boarders. Staff accommodation is suitable and not accessed inappropriately by boarders. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 The school ensures that boarders do not experience discrimination on any grounds. Boarders of different faiths, for example, are given opportunities to attend the appropriate place of worship wherever possible. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils said the school does not ask for their opinions. However, inspectors saw evidence that heads of house and their deputies meet regularly with senior staff, and that pupils' views are sought through house committees, school councils and food councils, as well as several suggestion boxes. They concluded that the school takes note of boarders' opinions, as seen for example in water coolers being installed in houses and adaptations to menus. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The complaints policy meets requirements and is followed appropriately. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 There are many opportunities for responsibility and leadership including acting as house prefects. Prefects have job descriptions and appropriate training. They may not impose sanctions. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not use long-term lodgings. [NMS 20 not applicable]