

# Rishworth School

Inspection report for Boarding School

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<b>Inspection date</b>	16/03/2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Robert Curr / Debbie Foster
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Head/Principal</b>	Richard Baker
<b>Nominated person</b>	Andrew Brooks
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	25/09/2006

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This school is a co-educational school for children aged between 3 and 18 years. It was established in the eighteenth century and is set in extensive grounds just outside Ripponden in West Yorkshire. In addition to teaching academic subjects the school also has a co-ordinator of learning support, a department responsible for the teaching of English as a foreign language and a range of sporting and extra curricular activities available to all pupils

There is a long tradition of co-educational boarding. Within the school boarding is available to students from age 11 to 18. Pupils are able to board on a fulltime (excluding holidays) or a weekly basis. They are accommodated in single sex houses. The school offers full time, weekly and flexi-boarding.

### Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This announced inspection, which looked at the key standards in all the Every Child Matters outcome areas, found that this school provides a high level of pastoral and social care for boarders. The quality of the premises and the available activities for boarders is of a high standard. The quality of care is well supported by a comprehensive range of clearly written policies and procedures. Boarders enjoy a warm, supportive living arrangement supported by a caring dedicated staff team.

### Improvements since the last inspection

No recommendations were raised at the last inspection.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' health is promoted through an excellent range of health education policies and procedures. The staff actively put into effect a thorough, well-structured personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). External agencies are used where appropriate. There is excellent liaison between teaching and boarding staff enabling consistency and good awareness when covering sensitive issues. Boarders benefit from an extensive range of resources available to assist in the delivery of PSHCE. The director of boarding is fully involved when pupils may require additional help or guidance to ensure they are well supported where necessary.

Boarders' health is maintained through a well-organised sanatorium, which is staffed by a matron and three assistants to care for pupils. The matron oversees all matters relating to health and medication and is available on call outside of school hours if necessary. Continuity of care for boarders is ensured by the excellent liaison between the house staff and the matron where appropriate. Boarders' health is protected and promoted by the safe storage and administration of medication. Detailed records and comprehensive procedures are in place for this purpose. Medical consents from parents, and staff suitably trained in first aid in the boarding houses, ensure that emergency treatment can be provided. Boarders are all highly satisfied with the care provided by the matronic staff.

The school has an in-house catering service. The four-week menu plan indicates that a varied and nutritional diet is provided. The school menu provides choice and the opportunity for young people to experience international cuisine. Special diets are individually catered for. Pupils say that the standard of food provided is very good and food sampled was of a high standard. Facilities are in place in each boarding house for the provision of snacks. Drinking water is made readily available in the sleeping areas of the boarding houses.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are effectively protected through the school's positive approach to dealing with bullying. A comprehensive policy is followed in practice and the boarders and staff are very clear about what they should do if concerned about bullying. Boarders reported zero levels of bullying incidents throughout the school and confirmed that minor incidents are dealt with effectively and sensitively.

Boarders' welfare is protected through clear and robust child protection policies and procedures which are consistent with the local safeguarding procedures. The school is following the correct procedures in regard to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children. All appropriate staff have received child protection training and have a clear understanding about their responsibilities in respect of keeping boarders safe. The designated child protection officer for the school demonstrates an excellent awareness of the key legislation in respect of child protection. All of the boarders confirm they feel protected.

Boarders develop positively through the culture adopted at the school to genuinely care and have concern for others. Reward incentives include a rewards scheme for achievement or good behaviour of an individual or a group. The school has clear policies and practice on behaviour and discipline. Very few punishments are given. Boarders are aware of the punishment system and feel it is both fair and appropriate. Boarders benefit from the positive, nurturing relationships that are fostered throughout the boarding provision.

Boarders' welfare is protected through a rigorous complaints procedure. There is a clear understanding within the boarding staff team that any concern or complaint will

be taken seriously and properly resolved, either formally or informally. Boarders confirm they know how to raise a concern and that they would be listened to and the issue dealt with appropriately. There have been no formal complaints since the last full inspection carried out in November 2007.

Boarders are protected from the risk of fire by rigorous fire safety precautions and well trained staff. Regular fire evacuations take place and all fire safety equipment is checked and serviced in line with the requirements of the fire and rescue service, with detailed records maintained. Fire risk assessments are comprehensive and are thoroughly reviewed. There are no outstanding recommendations from the fire and rescue service. Boarders demonstrate a very good understanding of the school's evacuation procedures.

Boarders' privacy is respected by non-intrusive staff who are sensitive when entering bathrooms or bedrooms. All bathrooms, toilets and showers have appropriate locks and are private. All boarders have a lockable place in which they can store treasured possessions. Boarders have their own mobile telephones should they need to make or receive a private call. They also have access to landline telephones in each boarding house.

Boarders' welfare is protected by a staff recruitment process. The school follows a very clear policy on recruitment in line with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance. A detailed record of the selection process undertaken ensures rigorous checks are in place prior to new staff commencing work. Criminal Record Bureau disclosures at the enhanced level are undertaken for all personnel at the school, who may have unsupervised contact with the boarders.

Boarders' welfare is protected and safeguarded through comprehensive security measures. The school has a clear policy process on restricting public access that is reviewed regularly. Boarding accommodation is reserved solely for the use of those boarders designated to it. All boarding areas are suitably protected by the use of window restrictors, door key pads and locks. All boarders expressed a view that they feel safe and secure in their accommodation.

Boarders are safeguarded by an extensive health and safety policy, comprehensive risk assessments and well-trained staff. Maintenance issues are prioritised and staff work effectively to ensure boarders are protected from unavoidable hazards. Boarders are protected by highly effective checking of electrical appliances and fixed installations, swimming pool management and safe storage of all substances hazardous to health. Boarders' welfare is promoted through a variety of comprehensive assessments relating to activities undertaken, the school grounds and any other known risks.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders benefit from excellent levels of individual support provided by pastoral and academic staff. The house mistresses and house masters play an important role in the wellbeing of the boarders, providing the link between the academic and pastoral systems. In addition there are numerous other staff readily available to provide support and encouragement. These include the boarding house assistants and the matronic team. Boarders are clear about which members of staff they can go to for personal support. Boarders state that they enjoy the support they receive from being part of the boarding houses which promotes the strong sense of community that exists within the school.

Boarders' lives are enhanced through the school's commitment to equal opportunities and the reciprocal, caring ethos experienced by them. The school positively welcomes and celebrates the diversity of its boarders. Excellent arrangements are in place for boarders for whom English is not their first language. All staff support and promote the integration of the international students. Arrangements are made for boarders to attend churches of their own choice. Religious festivals are celebrated and boarders are supported to observe any elements of their own faith.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders benefit from having an abundance of opportunities to contribute their views and opinions to the operation of the boarding provision. These include the weekly boarding house assemblies, boarding committee, social committee and food committee. Clear comments came from boarders that state 'we are listened to' and good use is made of the weekly news letter, The Whalder Times. Staff respond to boarders in a positive and supportive way and boarders also commented on the positive relationships they have with staff.

Boarders' welfare is enhanced and maintained through positive contact with their parents, families and friends. They have their own email addresses and can use the boarding house landline in addition to their personal mobile telephones. There is exceptionally close contact between the house staff and the senior management team to ensure parents are kept up to date with progress or any worries that may arise.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The school has two boarding houses. Staff state that the school prides itself on offering a traditional boarding experience along with a well-structured pastoral system which provides boarding pupils with a rich and varied life seven days a week.

All boarding houses have their own individual character. All boarding houses have day rooms, study areas and kitchens. There is internet access in all houses. Sleeping accommodation is in shared rooms or single rooms depending on age. Boarders report that this is a positive experience which promotes friendships. There are sufficient showers, washbasins and toilets in all areas.

There is a rolling refurbishment programme which is specified in the school's development plan and all boarding houses are maintained well overall. They are also appropriately lit and suitably furnished. Both houses have a high standard of cleanliness due to a very efficient and dedicated team of domestic staff employed by the school.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The statement of boarding principles and practice is readily available to parents, boarders and staff and can be found in the prospectus and accompanying literature. The director of boarding offers a very informative presentation of 'School Boarding' via a power point system to a number of groups and agencies. In addition the boarding provision has its own handbook welcoming boarders and setting out the expectations of life in the houses.

The promotion of equality and diversity in the school is outstanding. This is evidenced by the freedom of access by both genders to the sporting, leisure and recreational facilities within the school and the social engagement of boys and girls in all aspects of school life. The religious observance includes a multi-faith approach based on various religious and moral teachings; boarders spoken to felt that this was a strength of the school. The school offers multi-cultural cuisine and welcomes boarders from numerous countries and religious faiths. The school has clearly written policies on disability, gender equality and racial equality.

Boarders benefit from a very well run setting. The monitoring of risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents is exemplary. Action is taken to reduce risks identified by risk assessments and when trends or patterns may emerge. Communication is a strength of the school, underpinned by an effective system. Various weekly meetings take place between personnel on the senior management team to ensure consistency across all disciplines.

Boarders' welfare is protected and promoted by ample staffing levels, day and night, with staff having relevant experience to meet their needs. Boarders confirm they always know who is on duty at any time and how to summon assistance should the need arise. There are clear arrangements for managing and supervising staff.

Boarders enjoy the care provided by a dedicated staff team. The boarding staff team are competent, motivated and professional. Staff meet regularly through various forums to ensure consistency for boarders. Staff receive induction and are encouraged and supported to access further professional development opportunities.



Each member of staff receive regular appraisal via professional development reviews. Boarders commented favourably on the staff at the school and how well they are cared for.