



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LONGRIDGE TOWERS SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Longridge Towers School

Full Name of School	Longridge Towers School		
DfE Number	929/6001		
Registered Charity Number	513534		
Address	Longridge Towers School Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 2XQ		
Telephone Number	01289 307584		
Fax Number	01289 302581		
Email Address	enquiries@lts.org.uk		
Head	Mr Tim Manning		
Chair of Governors	Mr John Smithson		
Age Range	3 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	262		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (128 girls; 134 boys)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	22	5-11: 69
	11-18:	171	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	236	
Number of Boarders	Total:	26	
	Full:	23	Weekly: 3
Inspection dates	20 Nov 2013 to 22 Nov 2013		

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 March 2011 and can be found at 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 and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding, 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

Mr Martin Ayres

Mrs Sarah Gomm

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding
(Deputy Head, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Longridge Towers School is a co-educational school for pupils aged from 3 to 18, set in an eighty-acre estate, three miles west of Berwick-upon-Tweed. The main house was built in the 1870s and later used as a school, as accommodation for troops and as a hotel, before becoming for 30 years an Ursuline convent and school. The estate was then sold to the charitable trust that now owns it and, in 1983, a new non-denominational school was founded. The school is now managed by a board of 12 governors. The Junior Department, a largely autonomous unit for pupils aged from four to eleven, is housed in two buildings in the grounds, separate from the main house that accommodates the Senior School, boarding and administration.
- 1.2 There are 262 pupils on roll, of whom 26 are boarders, including 23 full boarders and 3 weekly boarders. In addition, 17 pupils from Holy Island occasionally board when the island is inaccessible. The school has identified 37 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, none of whom has a statement of special educational needs. Nine pupils speak English as an additional language, and where necessary received extra language support.
- 1.3 Day pupils come from north Northumberland, and the eastern and central Scottish Borders, mostly from professional, business and farming backgrounds. Some boarders are from HM forces families, and some come from China, Russia, Spain and Zimbabwe. The school is non-selective, although pupils are normally assessed on entry for diagnostic or setting purposes.
- 1.4 The school aims are: to provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve their potential, broaden their experience and become effective lifelong learners; to educate the whole person in a happy community where pupils feel valued, safe and supported; to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of all, so that pupils can achieve excellence academically, artistically, creatively, physically, emotionally, spiritually and socially; to encourage mutual respect, independence, consideration for others, a sense of self-worth and personal responsibility; to provide high quality teaching focused on promoting each pupil's learning; and to give equal opportunities to all, and foster effective relationships with pupils, parents and other professional bodies.

- 1.5 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 NC equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Junior Department

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery
Reception	Reception
J 1	Year 1
J 2	Year 2
J 3	Year 3
J 4	Year 4
J 5	Year 5
J 6	Year 6

Senior School

School	NC name
1	Year 7
2	Year 8
3	Year 9
4	Year 10
5	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	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. Ensure that the arrangements to supervise and appraise boarding staff are underpinned by a written policy.
2. Ensure that the safeguarding policy is explicitly phrased in respect of the arrangements for handling any allegations against boarding staff.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in March 2011. There were no recommendations regarding boarding provision.

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 An appropriate process is established for induction and guidance for new boarders. Each boarder has a choice of staff to whom they can turn for personal guidance or help. Staff in boarding maintain excellent and supportive relationships with boarders and create a nurturing and homely atmosphere. The boarders' handbook is comprehensive, and new boarders have a tour of the house in addition to a 'buddy' system. Boarders confirm that they feel well supported by all staff in the school. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Policies and systems for the care of boarders who are unwell are effective. An experienced and trained matron is active in ensuring that the health needs of boarders are being met. The school maintains a positive focus on health promotion including healthy eating, exercise and keeping safe. Confidentiality is appropriately maintained at all times, and arrangements for gaining consent to medical treatment and care are clear. Suitable arrangements are established for the care of boarders who are ill, including overnight. Boarders can summon help and assistance when needed and have good, timely access to dental, optical and other forms of specialist care. Prescriptions are used only by the boarders for whom the medicine is prescribed and this is effectively monitored. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are helped to maintain contact with their parents and carers. Wireless internet connectivity is available in all the rooms. Boarders also utilise a landline in the boarding office. A few pupils raised the issue of internet access due to the remote location of the school in their responses to the pupils' questionnaire. Inspectors found that contact and communication arrangements are being given appropriate priority by the school. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Girls and boys are separately accommodated on different floors of the house, with security codes on the doors. Boarding accommodation is homely, with a suitable number of showers, sinks and toilets. Some rooms are en-suite and any sharing arrangements are age-appropriate. Boarders can personalise their rooms, which have desks for private study with internet access. Dedicated codes on the boarding house door, coupled with the positioning of the dormitories, ensure that boarding accommodation is kept appropriately separate and reserved for boarders only. Visitors have to sign in and boarding staff maintain suitable vigilance regarding security and access to the accommodation, which does not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Kitchen staff prepare three nutritious meals a day for boarders, in addition to snacks. Both vegetarians and those with allergies are catered for in addition to religious requirements. Suitable accommodation is provided for the hygienic preparation, serving and consumption of boarders' main meals. A lively and bright kitchen area in the boarding house alongside a tuck shop provides boarders with access to snacks outside main mealtimes. House staff also prepare home-made soups and bread for boarders, as well as brunch at weekends. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 An excellent laundry system is in place for boarders' clothes, bedding and other items. Laundry items are washed and returned the same day, and sixth formers are able to do their own washing if they so wish. Money and other valuable items are

securely stored by the school, with appropriate records for monitoring their access and use. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 The school provides an extensive and imaginative enrichment programme for all pupils at the school, including boarders. This enables boarders to become engaged in a wide range of activities and pursuits, and to maintain particular interests or hobbies. House staff also organise an excellent range of trips at weekends. The school has extensive grounds and common room areas for the boarders' use. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 All appropriate measures are in place to ensure boarders' health and safety. The school has established policies relating to specific aspects of health and safety and these are regularly reviewed. An external consultant is used to review the school's policies and procedures, and risk assessments for activities both on and off the school site show good awareness of potential hazards. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Fire risk assessments exist for all areas of the school and these are regularly reviewed. Fire drills take place both in and out of regular school hours, and are recorded appropriately, together with appliance and alarm checks. [NMS]
- 3.12 The child protection and safeguarding policy and procedure are fully disseminated across the school and made available to all staff in written form and through training at the beginning of each school year. A named designated person is suitably trained in safeguarding and effectively oversees training for all other staff. The school's procedures for safeguarding, including an annual review of the policy, are followed effectively. Although the policy indicates the correct process for reporting any concerns about the conduct of staff and is in accordance with local safeguarding board arrangements, it is not phrased in a sufficiently clear way. The school has established effective lines of communication with local children's services in the county and across the Scottish border. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school has clear policies and procedures to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying. There is a culture within the school and boarding house of mutual trust and support, with very positive relationships amongst boarders themselves and between boarders and staff. Serious misdemeanours are rare, and are dealt with in accordance with the school's published measures and suitably recorded. Minor issues are handled well by boarding house staff and sanctions are clearly recorded. Arrangements for searching boarders and their possessions are appropriate and always employed with sensitivity. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Staff recruitment checks, including for the use of volunteers, follow official guidance and include appropriate risk assessments and supervision as necessary. Supervision arrangements for contractors and others when on the school grounds are appropriately authorised and recorded. [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 clear statement of boarding principles and practice is established, which is fully disseminated across the school and is readily accessible to all pupils, parents and carers, and which was seen to work in practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Governors and the senior leadership team provide excellent support for the boarding experience. Clear lines of accountability are established from the senior leadership team to boarding staff to ensure that policies and procedures are understood, implemented and regularly reviewed. The quality of practice across the school in respect of boarding provision and the promotion of welfare and management is good and enhanced by effective leadership. The staff team within the boarding house has a good level of experience and training. All records required in respect of the day-to-day operation of boarding provision are accurately and consistently maintained. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Role specifications and job descriptions are clear for boarding staff and senior prefects. Good induction processes are implemented alongside staff training. Boarding staff are highly committed to the support and well-being of boarders, and make themselves available at all times to ensure that the needs of individual boarders are being met. Staff duty rotas and details of external contacts, such as ChildLine, are provided within the boarding house. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders are highly supportive of one another and report that they do not experience discrimination. They indicate that they enjoy living with peers from different cultures and backgrounds, and this has increased their awareness of the wider world. Boarding staff respond well to different needs and create a warm and open atmosphere in the boarding house. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Boarders are provided with good opportunities to express their views on matters affecting them. The arrangements to gain the views of boarders are effective, and include direct discussion, forums and access to an independent listener, with many examples of where action has been taken in response to matters raised, for example the provision of specific food items. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school's complaints policy is on its website and provides information on the arrangements for making representations and on how any complaints will be handled, the timescales involved and measures taken at the different stages of the process. Complaints have been effectively resolved at an early stage. The school takes representations and complaints seriously, and records demonstrate that these are handled with sensitivity and in a timely manner. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The role of prefects is appropriately defined, with clear statements of what they are permitted to do in respect of the supervision of other pupils. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings. [NMS 20]