
HM Inspectors of Schools

Follow-up to the Care and Welfare Inspection of Loretto School

Main points for action

1. *The accommodation, health and safety issues raised in the report, and discussed with the school, should be addressed.*

The school had made good progress towards meeting this recommendation.

A phased programme of refurbishing boarding houses had been undertaken, including redecoration and the replacement of carpets and curtains where required. Showers in most houses had been refurbished to provide appropriate privacy. Commendably, housemasters and housemistresses had been given a budget that had been used effectively to provide better furniture, electrical equipment, books and indoor games. Most houses now had a homelier atmosphere. Snack facilities and kitchens in a number of houses had been upgraded. All houses now had improved ICT facilities, including access to e-mail. Increased privacy for telephones had been provided where necessary. Improved school security measures included additional security lighting and badges for visitors and maintenance staff. Electrical equipment owned by the school was now checked as a matter of routine. Equipment brought in by pupils was not checked, however, and the school needed to review its procedures in this regard. The speed of response to some important maintenance issues was variable.

2. *The school should develop agreed care and welfare policies, and more consistent forms of record keeping, to be applied in every house.*

The school had made good progress towards meeting this recommendation.

House handbooks were maintained more consistently than at the time of the inspection and now included clear aims for the house and expectations of pupils; useful house information and pupil routines; and key policies for dealing with child protection, anti-bullying and pastoral care. Incidents, medical and complaints logs were now maintained. Fire practice registers had been regularised and kept up-to-date. House councils for pupils were now held in each house on a regular basis, with minutes published and circulated appropriately. However, a greater degree of consistency in the application of signing in and signing out procedures, house record keeping and some aspects of house routine was still required to ensure that pupils received equal treatment in all houses.

3. *The school should introduce more systematic quality assurance procedures, including the monitoring of care and welfare policies and practices by senior promoted staff.*

Good progress made in relation to some houses. More remained to be done to meet the recommendation fully.

After the inspection, the then headmaster had conducted a “homeliness audit” in all houses by visiting and speaking to pupils. Subsequently a rolling programme of quality assurance audits had been undertaken in Holm, Hope, Pinkie and School

houses, with systematic use of published performance indicators, discussions with focus groups of pupils, the collation of results and the production of a house development plan with targets for the future. House duties had been brought into the existing appraisal system for the relevant house staff. Due partly to the changes in senior house staff, the audit and appraisal systems had not yet been introduced to the remaining houses and now needed to be extended as quickly as practicable to address continuing inconsistencies of practice. Commendably, a care and welfare sub-committee of the Board of Governors had been established to provide increased quality assurance through direct contact with boarders.

4. *There should be self-evaluation using the published performance indicators in "Improving the Care and Welfare of Residential Pupils" (SOEID, 1998).*

There had been good progress with this recommendation in some houses, as described above. The system of self-evaluation now needed to be applied to all houses.

5. *The school should review its arrangements for the medical care of pupils.*

There had been a very good response to this recommendation which had been fully met.

The Medical Centre had been refurbished and extended. A new medical care team had been appointed. Pupils appreciated greatly the quality of medical care now provided. Care was needed, that when sick pupils remained in their houses, appropriate staff cover was available for their care.

6. *The school should develop a more systematic approach to staff development related to care and welfare issues for all staff, including non-teaching staff, as part of the development planning process.*

Some action had been taken to meet this recommendation but more sustained progress was needed.

Some staff development activities had been arranged within the school. Staff were made aware of staff development opportunities outwith the school. A more systematic approach to identifying and meeting the staff development needs of care staff, including matrons, was still required to support a more coherent approach to responding to pupils' care needs.

The school has made good progress in addressing the majority of the main points for action. However, there remain some inconsistencies of practice and provision between houses which require further action. I would therefore ask the Board of Governors to provide a report by September 2001 on progress towards meeting the outstanding aspects.