



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

**BOARDING SCHOOL**

**Hethersett Old Hall School**

**Norwich  
Norfolk  
NR9 3DW**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Mrs Dorrit Andrews**

*Announced Inspection*  
**30th January 2007 09:30 am**

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Boarding Schools*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

# SCHOOL INFORMATION

<b>Name of school</b>	Hethersett Old Hall School
<b>Address</b>	Norwich Norfolk NR9 3DW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603 810390
<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	The Very Reverend Michael Yorke
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mrs J Mark
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	
<b>Age range of boarding pupils</b>	13-19 years
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	9-10 <sup>th</sup> March 2004

## **Brief Description of the School:**

Hethersett Old Hall School is an independent boarding and day school in the Norfolk countryside on the outskirts of Norwich. The school is located primarily in Hethersett Old Hall and a number of adjacent buildings.

The school accepts boys and girls as day pupils from 4 to 7 years of age; the school is girls only from the age of 7 years. The school offers girls only boarding facilities for children aged from 8 years. These facilities are located in the main Hall and an adjacent 6<sup>th</sup> form block.

# SUMMARY

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

This inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Commission for Social care Inspection and took place on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007. The inspection involved discussion with pupils and staff, including the Headmistress, boarding house staff and ancillary staff. A number of records were inspected and a tour of the accommodation was undertaken. The inspector joined pupils for meals, including supper and breakfast.

A total of 19 boarders completed a Pupil Survey.

The inspector was made to feel welcome and the school participated in the inspection in an open and positive manner.

The school is providing a **good** standard of care for boarding pupils.

Any recommendations for improvement are made at the end of this report.

## What the school does well:

The school demonstrates great commitment to providing a supportive and nurturing environment for its boarders. Comments made by pupils gave further endorsement of the inspector's findings.

The following are of particular note:

- "Feels like home – there is everything we need."
- "Enjoyable environment."
- People are nice and friendly.
- Boarding staff are nice.
- "Housemistresses are always nice and we can speak to them."
- "Staff are doing their best to help us."
- "There is always someone around."

There is a strong sense of community within the school and pupils were found to be courteous and engaging.

Good written information is made available to boarders.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The school is to be commended for the work undertaken in response to the recommendations of the last full welfare inspection of March 2004 and the subsequent follow up visits of February 2005 and January 2006. Praise is also extended to the commitment of the Headmistress and boarding house staff to provide a stable environment for boarders following a period of staff changes within the boarding house.

- A number of dormitories and bedrooms have been re-decorated and refurbished to a high standard.
- A number of the showers in the Main Hall have been replaced with new ensuite shower and toilet facilities for some dormitories.
- Ancillary staff have received appropriate child protection guidance and arrangements are being made for a refresher briefing to take place by the end of this academic year.
- The school's child protection policy has been reviewed.
- The school's complaints procedure has been amended to include details of CSCI as recommended following the previous inspection.
- A formal system of seeking boarders' views has been implemented whereby boarders are encouraged to detail any issues or concerns in a Suggestions Book. This system complements the number of informal avenues open to pupils to raise concerns or worries.
- Arrangements are in place for the regular review of risk assessments.
- Arrangements are in place for the review and appraisal of boarding house staff.

## **What they could do better:**

This is a very positive report on the progress made since the last full inspection of 2004 and subsequent follow up visits of 2005 and 2006.

Re-instatement of the school's Food Committee would help to channel pupils' comments in relation to menus more effectively and efficiently.

Re-instatement of morning House staff briefings would help to consolidate new staff members into the team.

Recent staff changes have highlighted the need for a more formal, sequential programme of induction for House staff and a review of the Staff Handbook to reflect current practice.

The inspector wishes to convey her appreciation to the staff and pupils for their positive approach to the inspection.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

# Being Healthy

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Boarders' health is promoted. (NMS 6)
- Safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records. (NMS 7)
- Boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary. (NMS 15)
- Boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill. (NMS 16)
- Boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal Problems. (NMS 17)
- Boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals. (NMS 25)
- Boarders are suitably accommodated when ill. (NMS 48)
- Boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered. (NMS 49)

**The Commission considers Standards 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.**

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

**6 and 15**

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

The health care of boarders is promoted and they receive health care as necessary.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Age appropriate personal, social and health education primarily takes place within the teaching environment of the school and in tutorial time. Outside professionals are occasionally invited in to discuss specific topics. School assemblies are also used as a forum to raise pupils' awareness of particular matters. Additional support is available from the school's registered nurses.

When health related issues arise in the boarding house, these are discussed sensitively and appropriately with the girls concerned.

The school continues to employ two registered nurses who between them are available to all pupils from 8am to 6pm. Boarding staff are able to contact the nurses outside of this time for advice if required. A positive working relationship remains with the local GP surgery.

The school obtains a basic medical history of each pupil and parental consent to medical treatment and first aid at the point of admission. Pupils have access to appropriate medical, optical and dental services as required.

Very good systems are in place with regard to the safe storage and administering of medication. An appropriate record of accidents and illnesses is also maintained.

School Nurses are able to attend study days in order to maintain their professional registration. First Aid training is made available to appropriate staff and is regularly updated.

The school also organises and hosts termly meetings for Nurses from local independent schools to share good practice and discuss topical issues. This initiative is to be commended.

## Staying Safe

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Boarders are protected from bullying. (NMS 2)
- Boarders are protected from abuse. (NMS 3)
- Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate. (NMS 4)
- Boarders' complaints are appropriately responded to. (NMS 5)
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- Boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school. (NMS 22)
- Boarders are protected from the risk of fire. (NMS 26)
- The welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school. (NMS 28)
- Boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities. (NMS 29)
- Boarders' personal privacy is respected. (NMS 37)
- There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders. (NMS 38)
- Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises. (NMS 39)
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. (NMS 41)
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards. (NMS 47)

**The Commission considers Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.**

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

**2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39,41 and 47.**

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

The school encourages pupils and parents to raise any concerns or worries they may have.

Children are made aware of Health and Safety matters affecting them in school and in the boarding house.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The school's countering bullying policy continues to be made available to staff, parents and pupils. Analysis of the Pupil Survey and subsequent discussions with boarders did not identify bullying as being a problem at the school. The issue of bullying is regularly discussed through the school's PSHE programme and at assemblies. Information is also displayed on pupils' notice boards throughout the school and boarding house.

The school's child protection procedures were updated following the last inspection (March 2004) and further amendments have recently been made. The procedures will be included in the Staff Handbook which is currently being revised. The Head, designated member of staff for child protection, recently attended a local child protection briefing. Plans are being put in place to update all staff regarding child matters, including ancillary, by the end of this academic year.

Details of the school's behaviour and discipline policy continue to be made available to staff, pupils and parents. A system of rewards is also in place. Discussions with groups of boarders did not raise any problems in relation to discipline. Pupils stated that staff are fair and that very few sanctions are applied. Examination of records also confirmed this. The school does not have prefects; instead all 6<sup>th</sup> formers are happy to keep a "sisterly" watch over younger pupils.

Amendments were made to the school's complaints policy and procedures following the last inspection. Appropriate information is made available to staff, pupils and parents. The school reports that no serious complaints have

been received since the last inspection. No parent or boarder has contacted the CSCI regarding any concerns. The school encourages pupils and parents to raise any concerns or worries they may have at any early stage.

Discussions with boarders evidenced their awareness of the school's fire evacuation procedures, and indicated that regular fire drills take place in the boarding house. A fire risk assessment of the school and boarding provision is in place; work is progressing in response to this. Fire fighting equipment is regularly serviced and tested together with emergency lighting and fire alarm systems.

No problems were reported by pupils with regard to their privacy in the boarding houses. Discussions with staff evidenced sensitivity to such matters. Details of the school's policy with regard to staff entering girls' bedrooms are included in the Boarders' Handbook.

Discussion with the Head's PA demonstrated a good understanding of the criteria detailed in Standard 38 in respect of staff recruitment and staff checks. Good systems are in place to support the tracking of recruitment processes and requests for information. The two personnel files examined were found to be in good order. The school is in the process of seeking outside professional advice to help update all employment and personnel documentation and induction procedures. The Head is soon to participate in on-line safe recruitment training.

The school confirmed that outside visitors to the boarding house are kept under sufficient staff supervision to prevent their substantial unsupervised access to boarders. Wherever possible, maintenance staff will attend to any required tasks during school hours when the boarders are not present in the Houses.

Boarding areas are for the exclusive use of boarders and those sharing study provision. Security matters are taken seriously by the school with staff monitoring the public use of outside facilities such as the sports hall and swimming pool during the evenings, and ensuring that the school's locking up procedure is followed. New security measures added since the last inspection include new gates, keypad locks, additional lighting and additional perimeter fencing.

The school's Estate Manager confirmed that safety glass is fitted where there is a significant risk of impact. Additional electrical sockets have been installed and a PAT testing system is in place throughout the school and boarding areas. The school's health and safety policy is regularly reviewed and monitored by the school's health and safety committee. Pupils are made aware of health and safety matters affecting them in school and in the boarding house; such matters include out of bounds areas.

A system of risk assessment is in place throughout the school community. The school's Estate Manager advised that all risk assessments are regularly reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee.

# Enjoying and Achieving

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.(NMS 14)
- Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination.(NMS 18)
- Boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.(NMS 27)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision to study.(NMS 43)
- Boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas.(NMS 46)

**The Commission considers Standards 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.**

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

**14 and 18**

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

Personal support for boarders is available from a wide range of staff. Children do not experience inappropriate discrimination.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Analysis of the Pupil Survey and pupil discussion groups evidenced a wide range of adults within the school to whom children would turn for guidance or personal support. Every encouragement is given to pupils to share any worries or concerns they may have with a member of staff of their choosing. A number of teaching and boarding staff were highly spoken of.

Pupil discussions groups evidenced children's awareness of how to contact the school's Independent Listener if they wished. Written contact details of the Independent Listener are displayed on notice boards. It was also confirmed that the school has undertaken a CRB check in respect of the Independent Listener.

Overseas boarders continue to be closely supported by their EFL teacher who is very committed to providing a high level of pastoral support both within the school environment and the boarding houses. This is to be commended.

Parents and pupils are aware of the school's Christian ethos and that pupils of all beliefs are welcome. The school continues to attempt to positively promote the integration of all pupils throughout the school. The inspector found no evidence of discrimination of any form.

# Making a Positive Contribution

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school.(NMS 12)
- Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families.(NMS 19)
- New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in.(NMS 21)
- Boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school.(NMS 30)
- There are sound relationships between staff and boarders.(NMS 36)

**The Commission considers Standards 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.**

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

**12 and 19**

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

Boarders are encouraged to contribute to the operation of the boarding provision, and are able to maintain private contact with their parents and families.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Discussions with boarders and analysis of the Pupil Survey evidenced both formal and informal opportunities for the girls to contribute views to the operation of the boarding house. These include informal house meetings, the School Council, use of a 'Suggestions' book and ready access to a range of staff.

Comments from boarders were positive regarding the feedback from ideas and requests they had recently put forward. In the past, pupils were able to refer specific matters relating to food and menus to a Food Committee. This was

seen as being an effective and efficient forum for dealing direct with pupils. In view of some of the comments made by pupils regarding menus and suppers for boarders, it is **recommended** that consideration be given to reinstating this forum.

Girls have appropriate access to a telephone in each of the boarding houses to contact parents in private at reasonable times without having to seek permission from staff. The boarding house office telephone is also made available to boarders when necessary. Parents and family members may also telephone during the evening and at weekends.

Appropriate helpline and outside contact numbers to ring in case of worries or problems are displayed on pupil notice boards. The majority of boarders also have their own mobile phone; these have to be handed in during the school day and at night time. Boarders also have access to the IT suite during the evenings and are able to use e-mail.

Whilst staff will readily contact parents about any concerns regarding their child, regular contact is maintained at dropping off and collecting times by the availability of House staff and the Headmistress, or her Deputy.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Boarders' possessions and money are protected. (NMS 20)
- Boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation. (NMS 40)
- Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation. (NMS 42)
- Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities. (NMS 44)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day. (NMS 45)
- Boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school. (NMS 50)
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted. (NMS 51)

**The Commission considers Standard 51 the key standard to be inspected.**

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

The school was not inspected against Standard 51, the key Standard for this grouping, as the school does not place boarders in lodgings.

**EVIDENCE:**

# Management

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- There is clear leadership of boarding in the school. (NMS 8)
- Crises affecting boarders' welfare are effectively managed. (NMS 9)
- The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare. (NMS 10)
- Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare. (NMS 23)
- Boarders are adequately supervised by staff. (NMS 31)
- Staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site. (NMS 32)
- Boarders are adequately supervised at night. (NMS 33)
- Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training. (NMS 34)
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice. (NMS 35)
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

**The Commission considers Standards 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

Clear information is made available regarding the school's care principles and practice for boarders.

New House Staff have joined the school and consequently the House team is re-establishing itself.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The school's Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice is detailed in the school's prospectus. Additional information is provided to parents and boarders prior to the commencement of boarding. Revised copies of boarding information are forwarded to existing boarders and their parents as appropriate. The "Boarders' Handbook" presents as informative, reflects life in the boarding house and relates to relevant school policies.

Following the recommendation made at the last inspection (March 2004), arrangements have been put in place for the regular monitoring of the school's records of risk assessments, sanctions, complaints and accidents. Only one misdemeanour warranting serious sanction has occurred since the last inspection. No formal complaints have been received.

Discussions with boarders confirmed that they are always made aware of who is on duty and who is responsible for them at specific times both within the boarding house and during free time. Boarders also have knowledge of where staff sleep at night and feel able to call upon staff if necessary.

A house staff duty rota is followed in practice and arrangements for duty cover in times of staff sickness and absence are satisfactory.

Staff changes have taken place in the boarding houses since the last inspection. The school experienced a difficult situation last term when a newly appointed member of house staff failed to take up an appointment following a road accident. Whilst there is now a full complement of staff, the house team is not yet fully established. Job descriptions are in place for boarding house staff.

In order to provide boarders with stability and consistency during the period of staff changes, the Headmistress was actively involved in the day to day running of the boarding provision and undertook evening and weekend duties. Positive comments were received from boarders regarding the Head's involvement with the boarding house and the general rapport between boarders and house staff.

Contractual probationary periods allow for staff to have regular discussions with senior staff. The school's induction programme allows for staff to 'shadow' colleagues and to discuss school policies and procedures, including child protection matters. However, the recent staff changes have highlighted the need for a more formal, sequential programme of induction for house staff and a review of the staff handbook to reflect current practice. It is therefore **recommended** that these matters be attended to in reference to the Appendices outlined in the **National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools**.

Duty House staff attend morning briefing meetings to relay notable information concerning boarders. The Headmistress meets the duty Housemistress on an informal daily basis and engages in a more formal meeting on Saturday mornings to discuss any potential problems or issues. Discussions with wider members of the House team stated that morning House staff briefings had formerly been a regular feature for the team and considered that these would help to consolidate new staff members into the team.

The school is committed to providing training opportunities for all staff, including child protection and wider pastoral care issues. Arrangements are in place for the annual review and appraisal of boarding staff, and the supervision of ancillary staff.



# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
6	3
7	X
15	3
16	X
17	X
24	X
25	X
48	X
49	X

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	3
3	3
4	3
5	3
13	X
22	X
26	3
28	X
29	X
37	3
38	3
39	3
41	3
47	3

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
11	X
14	3
18	3
27	X
43	X
46	X

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3
19	3
21	X
30	X
36	X

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
20	X
40	X
42	X
44	X
45	X
50	X
51	N/A

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

## Continued

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
8	X
9	X
10	X
23	3
31	3
32	X
33	X
34	3
35	X
52	X

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? NO

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	BS12 BS24	It is recommended that consideration be given to re-instating the Food Committee in order to respond to boarders' requests and views in relation to menus.	
2.	BS34	It is recommended that a more formal, sequential programme of induction be developed for House staff.	
3.	BS35	It is recommended that the Handbook for House staff be reviewed to reflect current practice.	

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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