



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

SHERBORNE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Sherborne School for Girls

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|------------|-------------------|
| Full Name of School | Sherborne School for Girls | | |
| DfE Number | 835/6024 | | |
| Registered Charity Number | 307427 | | |
| Address | Sherborne School for Girls Bradford Road Sherborne Dorset DT9 3QN | | |
| Telephone Number | 01935 818203 | | |
| Fax Number | 01935 818290 | | |
| Email Address | headmistress@sherborne.com | | |
| Head | Mrs Jenny Dwyer | | |
| Chair of Governors | Mr Steven Wingfield Digby | | |
| Age Range | 11 to 19 | | |
| Total Number of Pupils | 440 | | |
| Gender of Pupils | Girls | | |
| Numbers by Age | 11-16 : | 268 | 16-19: 172 |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: | 34 | |
| Number of Boarders | Full: | 406 | |
| Inspection dates | 26 Nov 2013 to 28 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 October 2009 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 a governors' representative 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 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 Gwen Caddock

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Sally Cunliffe

Team Inspector for Boarding (former Senior House Mistress, HMC school)

Ms Delyth Draper

Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head Pastoral, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sherborne School for Girls was founded in 1899 by Charlotte Wingfield Digby as an Anglican boarding school for girls, primarily for the sisters of boys attending Sherborne School. The school now also educates a small number of day girls. The school occupies the original site, a campus of 40 acres on the edge of the market town of Sherborne. Recent developments include a science centre which opened in September 2011 and the new junior boarding house which was opened in June 2013. The school retains its original foundation as a Church of England school and services in school and worship at Sherborne Abbey are part of the life of the school; girls of many other faiths and cultures are also welcomed. The school is a charitable company limited by guarantee with a governing body comprising 17 members who are also trustees of the charity. The work of the governing body is supported by a range of specialised committees and a number of governors who have specific responsibilities, for example, a governor has recently taken up responsibility for boarding.
- 1.2 The school aims that boarding life will encourage the development of the whole person, ensuring that girls can take advantage of academic and extra-curricular facilities and activities, and that each boarding house is a comfortable home to which the boarders return each day, where they will feel cared for, as well as providing a strong sense of identity, belonging and respect for every individual. .
- 1.3 There are currently 440 pupils on roll, of which 406 are full boarders and 34 day pupils. The school has seven boarding houses: one for the younger boarders, five houses for boarders in Years 9 to 12 and one house for Year 13 boarders. The school maintains its longstanding tradition that pupils eat all their meals in their boarding houses, many with a family style service. Boarders come from many parts of the United Kingdom and abroad. Currently 35 pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL) and all of these pupils receive support for their English. There are 72 pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and of these 51 receive specialist support for their difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.4 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.

| School | NC |
|--------------|---------|
| Lower Fourth | Year 7 |
| Upper Fourth | Year 8 |
| Lower Fifth | Year 9 |
| Middle Fifth | Year 10 |
| Upper Fifth | 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 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that the new online procedure to record administered medicines provides accurate information for the boarding houses and the health centre.
2. Ensure that meals are of a consistently good quality across the boarding houses.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in October 2009. The one recommendation made relating to offering balanced menus has been met. The previous ISI inspection took place in November 2010 and no recommendations were made in relation to boarding.

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 New boarders receive a letter of welcome from a buddy, a student handbook, and take part in a two-day induction programme. A welcome booklet helps international boarders integrate into boarding life. Parents and boarders agree that there are a number of staff to whom boarders may turn for help and younger boarders spoke highly of the 'Listeners and Supporters' scheme offered by older girls. House notice boards display appropriate helpline numbers including the Children's Rights Director. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has comprehensive and appropriate medical policies. The health centre, with qualified staff available 24 hours a day, provides care for sick or injured boarders and access to specialist health services, maintaining full medical records. Prescribed medicines are given only to the boarders for whom they are prescribed. Currently the school is replacing its paper records of medication dosage with a central online system to ensure more direct communication between boarding house staff and the medical centre. Boarders are allowed to self-medicate following an appropriate risk assessment. Confidentiality and their rights as patients are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders contact their parents and carers using their mobile phones, house payphones and their computers. The school has systems in place to ensure the safe use of cyber technology. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation is comfortable, appropriately maintained and clean. A programme of redevelopment is underway. Study areas include the use of wider school facilities for older girls. Washrooms, including some ensuite facilities, are sufficient in number, well placed and give suitable privacy. Comprehensive adjustments are made for boarders with restricted mobility. Boarders enjoy personalising their rooms. Security measures do not intrude and boarders say that they feel very safe in their houses. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Menus offer a number of choices and cater for the specific needs of individuals. In questionnaire responses the large majority of boarders felt that the food was good, whilst a small minority disagreed. Inspection found that the quality of food is good overall but inconsistent across the different houses. House kitchens provide hygienic food preparation areas. Drinks and snacks are available in the houses at breaks and in the evenings. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 The boarders' bedding is laundered in the houses and generally boarders wash their own clothes. The school shop stocks stationery and personal items and boarders are able to shop in the local town. Boarders say that their possessions are safe and suitable arrangements are made for safekeeping of pocket money and valuables when needed. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A wide range of activities includes social events with neighbouring schools. Boarders have appropriate free time, and enjoy many places where they can relax. In questionnaire responses a small minority of boarders said that they did not have enough free time. The inspection did not support these views and found that, whilst boarders lead busy lives, they are fully supported, with sufficient time for them to use as they decide. Boarders have access to world affairs through television, the internet, newspapers, magazines and a programme of outside speakers. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The health and safety policy has regard to official guidance and is thoroughly implemented ensuring maintenance of buildings and facilities. Regular checks on school electrical equipment are recorded in full. The school operates an appropriate system to monitor the safety and use of electrical equipment owned by boarders. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school meets all the requirements for fire safety, including the necessary risk assessments, and all checks and maintenance are fully recorded. Fire drills take place at the required intervals including in boarding time, and are suitably recorded. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and fully implemented, including the annual review by all governors. All have regard to the official guidance. The required training has been undertaken at appropriate levels and intervals including by governors. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school has thorough, compliant policies to guard against bullying and to promote good behaviour giving clear information on school rules, sanctions, the protocols for searching boarders and their possessions when necessary, and also on the use of restraint, which has never been needed. In responses to the questionnaires and in interviews boarders were clear that bullying rarely occurs and that they feel very well cared for. House and school records show appropriate use of punishments and merits. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school operates safe recruitment procedures include recording of the checks undertaken. All non-employees living in boarding accommodation have undergone the required DBS check and appropriate written agreements are in place. All visitors to houses are carefully supervised. The school does not arrange guardians. [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 publishes a full statement of boarding principles and practice which is fully implemented. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Management at both senior and house mistress levels is supported by suitable planning and the programme of development and refurbishment of boarding houses. Links are made between academic and pastoral monitoring systems and the personal tutors, to ensure effective care and academic development of boarders. The school maintains all the required records. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Clear job descriptions are in place with appropriate induction and mentoring for new staff, all staff receive annual reviews and have opportunities for further professional development. The role of all adult members of boarding households is made clear. Boarding teams provide effective supervision and boarders know who is on duty. Booking out systems inform staff of the whereabouts of their boarders and mobile phone numbers are kept in the houses so that they can be called if necessary. Staff know the procedure to use if a pupil is missing; this is rarely needed. At least one adult member of staff sleeps in each house and boarders know how to contact staff during the night. Staff have separate accommodation within the houses, and

appropriate guidelines are observed when boarders are invited to social events. [NMS 15]

- 3.19 The school operates an effective equal opportunities policy and boarders do not suffer discrimination for any reason. Care of boarders is sensitive to their needs, and supports boarders' equal opportunities. [NMS 18]
- 3.20 In their responses to the questionnaire boarders were largely positive about how the school listens to and responds to their views, though a small minority disagreed. In interviews boarders spoke of the wide range of ways in which they can make their views felt and minutes of meetings and published responses show that the school responds fully to the requests and that the boarders' views have been taken into account in many areas. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school publishes a compliant complaints policy and procedure. Detailed records show that this is properly used and complaints are fully recorded. Responses to questionnaires show that parents are highly positive in their support for the school. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Prefects are appointed in all boarding houses. They receive induction, safeguarding training and are fully supervised in their roles. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings. [NMS 20]