



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WOLDINGHAM SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Woldingham School

Full Name of School	Woldingham School
DfE Number	936/6111
Registered Charity Number	291258
Address	Woldingham School Marden Park Woldingham Caterham Surrey CR3 7YA
Telephone Number	01883 349431
Fax Number	01883 348653
Email Address	registrar@woldinghamschool.co.uk
Headmistress	Mrs Jayne Triffitt
Chairman of Governors	Mr Ian Tyler
Age Range	10 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	543
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Numbers by Age	10-11: 0 11-19: 543
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 224
Number of Boarders	Total: 319 Full: 319 Weekly: 0
Inspection Dates	27 Jan 2015 to 29 Jan 2015

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) Regulations 2014, as amended. 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.

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 governors, 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 Colette Culligan	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Lynn Doughton	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Department, GSA school)
Mr Joss Williams	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Founded in 1842 by the Society of the Sacred Heart, Woldingham School is a day and boarding school for girls in Surrey. It occupies an extensive rural site, Marden Park, which is just over half an hour from central London by train. There is a train station within the grounds. The school has a Catholic foundation and welcomes pupils from all Christian denominations and from other faiths or none. The school is now fully run by lay individuals. The governing body is also composed of lay individuals and includes a number of parent governors.
- 1.2 The school aims to be a caring and supportive Christian community in which girls are happy, confident and inspired to meet challenges. It seeks for its pupils to become independent, enquiring young women who achieve academic success and become positive influences in whichever sphere of life they enter. It sets out to ensure that its boarding practice is based on the principle of mutual respect in an open, trusting and happy atmosphere, with equality of opportunity for all. Boarding also aims to provide activities which will assist the personal development of boarders.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 543 pupils enrolled, of whom 319 were boarders. All boarding accommodation is on the school site. Girls in Years 7 and 8 live in Marden House and those in Years 9 to 11 in Main House. Year 12 boarders live in Berwick House and Year 13 in Shanley House. The majority of British boarders come from London or the Home Counties. Boarders from overseas come from over 30 countries, mainly China, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Russia, Spain and Mexico. There are 122 pupils who speak English as an additional language. Extra support in English is provided to the 66 boarders who require it.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, the school has completed the refurbishment of the boarding houses for Years 7 to 11. An examination centre has been created and a refurbishment programme for all the science laboratories is underway. A new deputy head was appointed in January 2015. In September 2014 a new head of Marden House was appointed and a resident priest joined the school as chaplain.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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. Extend the range of snacks available for boarders in the evenings.
2. Take steps to ensure that the decoration and furnishings in all common areas of boarding reflect the school's homely atmosphere and boarding aims.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in 2012. No recommendations were made in relation to boarding welfare 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 Comprehensive handbooks are sent to new boarders and their parents prior to girls joining the school. Suitable induction procedures for new boarders include the appointment of an experienced boarder to act as a 'buddy'. Boarders name a wide variety of adults to whom they would turn for help. Information on how to contact outside sources of support, including an independent listener and the Children's Commissioner, is clearly displayed on house notice boards. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Suitable policies for the care of boarders include guidance on first aid, care of those with chronic conditions or disabilities, dealing with emergencies and use of household remedies. The refurbished health centre, open seven days each week, is staffed by qualified nurses, and many staff hold first-aid qualifications. Appointments with other healthcare professionals are arranged as necessary. Dispensing of prescribed medicines is suitably managed and boarders who are considered competent to do so may self-medicate. Appropriate liaison between the health centre and boarding staff ensures consistent care while respecting the confidentiality and the rights of boarders. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are able to contact their families by telephone or through electronic communication systems. The school has appropriate protocols in place to ensure internet safety. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Suitably furnished sleeping and living accommodation is provided for the sole use of the boarders. Washing and toilet facilities offer the necessary privacy. Arrangements for private study are appropriate. Houses are warm, ventilated, adequately maintained and clean. Although boarders personalise their rooms, many common areas lack homely touches. Houses are suitably secure and closed circuit television does not impact on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Boarding houses have small kitchen areas where boarders may prepare snacks in the evenings. A minority of boarders responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that the range of evening snacks provided is limited. Inspection evidence supports this view. A small minority expressed in questionnaire responses dissatisfaction with meals. Evidence does not support this. Menus vary, with occasional themed days. Food is nutritious and plentiful, with suitable provision for boarders with particular health or religious needs. Kitchens and dining areas are clean and attractive. Drinking water is readily available. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 There is an efficient central laundry service and washing machines are also available for boarders. Boarders can obtain personal items from the school shop. The school provides boarders with a lockable drawer in which to store their valuables and encourages them to give larger amounts of money and essential documents to staff for safe keeping. Some boarders do not use these facilities, however, and a small minority felt that their possessions are not safe as a result. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 An appropriate range of activities is provided. A minority of boarders said in questionnaire responses that they are not happy with the balance between activities and free time. In interviews, however, these views were not confirmed, boarders saying that they have ample unstructured time, and inspection evidence supports

this view. The extensive grounds provide plentiful safe recreational areas. Newspapers, television, the internet and some school societies provide boarders with information about world events. Boarders can visit local towns at the weekend. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The school has an extensive written policy on health and safety, which is implemented fully. The maintenance team responds promptly to any concerns, so that the accommodation and facilities ensure as far as practicable the health, safety and well-being of the boarders. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Clear records are maintained of checks on fire equipment. The recommendations of an independent fire authority are methodically addressed to ensure that risk of fire is minimised. Fire drills are carried out regularly, including during the night when boarders are asleep. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The safeguarding policy has been updated to comply with the latest regulations, distributed to staff and made available on the website. All staff are trained to the appropriate levels and at the required intervals. Confidential records are stored appropriately and demonstrate that the school follows its procedures methodically as required, taking all necessary steps to safeguard boarders. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school's policies on behaviour are understood and respected by the staff and boarders. Boarders' responsible and positive attitudes contribute to the creation of an environment in which, they say, bullying is very rare and dealt with swiftly by the school. Records of sanctions are maintained and monitored. The school has not had to use its restraint policy. Staff use the school's policy on searching pupils and their belongings appropriately should it be necessary. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Safe recruitment procedures are implemented appropriately, ensuring that all required checks on staff are carried out and suitably recorded. Checks on resident non-employees are also completed and all resident adults have signed written agreements specifying the terms of their accommodation. Staff supervise visitors to the boarding accommodation so as to ensure the boarders' safety and privacy. The school does not arrange guardians for boarders from overseas but requires their parents to do so. [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 suitable statement of the school's boarding principles is provided to parents, staff and boarders. The commitment of staff to ensure the welfare of each boarder facilitates its implementation in practice. [NMS1]
- 3.17 Clear leadership and management of boarding enable close links to be established between academic and boarding staff in sharing information. Governors are conscious of and responsive to the needs of boarding. Required records are maintained and monitored, and appropriate action taken. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Boarding staff have an appropriate level of experience and clear job descriptions. They receive suitable induction, regular reviews of their performance and

opportunities for further development of their boarding practice, including attendance at external courses. Non-employee adults living in boarding houses have no official role. During non-teaching time, boarders are always under the care of an appropriate number of suitably qualified staff. Procedures for signing in and out and collection of mobile telephone numbers ensure that staff know, or can locate, the whereabouts of boarders at all times. The policy on boarders going missing is implemented appropriately as necessary. At least one adult member of staff, sleeping in each boarding house at night, is easily contactable by boarders. Suitable accommodation, to which boarders do not have inappropriate access, is provided for residential staff. [NMS 15]

- 3.19 Boarders do not experience any inappropriate discrimination. Cultural and religious differences are used to extend the boarders' awareness of and respect for global diversity. Boarders recently voted in a mock Nigerian election and boarders of various faiths voluntarily contribute to religious services in school. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 A small minority of boarders said in response to the questionnaire that they lack opportunities to contribute their views or to raise concerns. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Inspectors found many forums for these purposes, including a school committee, food committee and numerous suggestions boxes. The school acts on appropriate requests. Boarders are not penalised for raising any concern in good faith. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school has and follows a suitable complaints procedure for parents. Records of issues raised are appropriately maintained. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The prefects, known as Ribbons, have appropriate and specific responsibilities, such as organising the visits of guest speakers and liaising with younger boarders. They may not impose sanctions but raise any behavioural concerns with staff. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20]