



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WYCLIFFE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

BOARDING WELFARE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Wycliffe Preparatory School

The senior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	Wycliffe Preparatory School		
DfE Number	916/6018		
Registered Charity Number	311714		
Address	Wycliffe Preparatory School Ryeford Hall Stonehouse Gloucestershire GL10 2LD		
Telephone Number	01453 820499		
Fax Number	01453 825604		
Email Address	prep@wycliffe.co.uk		
Head	Mr Adrian Palmer		
Acting Chair of Trustees	Brigadier Robin Bacon		
Age Range	2 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	339		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (172 boys; 167 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	80	5-11: 168
	11-13:	91	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	286	
Number of Boarders	Total:	53	
	Full:	53	Weekly: 0
Inspection Dates	04 Mar 2014 to 06 Mar 2014		

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 2010 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 acting chair of trustees, 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 Bridget Windley

Mr Christopher Sparrow

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding
(Head of Boarding, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Wycliffe Preparatory School is an independent co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged two to thirteen. It was founded in 1928 as a preparatory school to Wycliffe College. A council of trustees (governors) oversees all parts of the preparatory school and the senior school. Wycliffe College is set in 23 acres at the foot of the Gloucestershire Cotswolds. The boarding houses, along with the playing fields, are situated on one side of a footbridge, with the main teaching facilities for Reception to Year 8 on the other side. Facilities include a modern theatre, a covered sports hall and an indoor swimming pool.
- 1.2 Opportunities for children to board commence at Year 3, with both full-time and flexible boarding offered. At the time of the inspection there were 53 full boarders, 30 of whom were boys and 23 were girls. There are approximately 20 additional beds for flexible boarding which are regularly used. The school has identified 68 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and approximately 11 pupils speak English as an additional language. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Boarders are drawn from mostly business and professional backgrounds in the local neighbourhood, with a significant number in the services. Most are of white British origin and approximately a tenth come from overseas.
- 1.3 Within a Christian ethos, the school aims to provide an all-round education for pupils both inside and outside the classroom, with an emphasis on creating an environment where they are safe and happy.
- 1.4 National Curriculum 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. Ensure that boarders understand the action taken with regard to the suggestions they put forward.
 2. Develop a more structured programme for activities on the Sundays that are not designated for off-site visits.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

- 2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in March 2010. Recommendations were made regarding the school's complaints procedures, medical processes, recruitment checks, fire procedures, boarders' privacy and the security of their possessions. These recommendations have been implemented in full.

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 The school has a suitable induction process to ensure that new boarders, including those from overseas, settle into the boarding experience. This includes 'taster' nights if feasible, and the provision of a handbook and a designated 'friend'. All boarders have a member of staff to whom they can turn for help or advice, and details of appropriate helplines are on display on notice boards. Boarders know how to contact the independent listener. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Boarders are appropriately cared for if they are sick or injured. This may be in the boarding house, the school sick bay or the senior school medical centre, and all have suitable accommodation for the boarders' care. A few boarders reported in pre-inspection questionnaire responses that they are not well looked after if they are ill or injured. Scrutiny of detailed medical records and information from discussions with boarders did not support this view. Detailed policies provide guidance on how to deal with medical emergencies, first aid and the care of those with chronic conditions or disabilities. Additional referrals can be made to local specialist medical services. All prescribed medicines and homely remedies are administered by appropriately qualified staff and are stored correctly. Any pupils who need to self-medicate are assessed as competent to do so, and the confidentiality and rights of the boarders are always respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders can contact family and friends using their mobile telephones, which are handed out in the evening. House telephones also offer privacy. Designated computer rooms allow boarders to contact their parents by email regularly and video messaging can be used by arrangement. In order to safeguard pupils, the school has appropriate systems to monitor and control the use of electronic communications. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The boarding houses, separated for boys and girls, are joined by communal recreational space. The accommodation is spacious, warm and well furnished, and most dormitories are homely, with a high standard of decor. A rolling programme of refurbishment in the boys' house is raising standards of facilities, though has yet to reach some areas. Common rooms offer a place to relax in comfort in the evenings. Washroom facilities are suitable and well located, and offer the required privacy. The houses are well serviced and maintained. Currently, no boarders have restricted mobility, but some consideration has been given to efforts that could be made to accommodate any such pupil. Boarders are able to personalise their sleeping areas, for example with duvet covers, posters and family photographs. The boarding accommodation is reserved for the use of the boarders who live there and security measures do not intrude upon their privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 A small minority of older boarders expressed in responses to the questionnaire dissatisfaction with the food or provision of snacks. However, boarders stated in interviews that there is always something that appeals. In discussions, it was established that dissatisfaction is due to the fact that second helpings are not always available. Inspectors found that meals provide a wide variety of choices and all dietary requirements are catered for. Food is prepared on site with fresh ingredients and in hygienic conditions, and is eaten in a light and spacious dining room.

Boarders have regular access to drinking water, and snacks, including fruit, are served at breaks during the day and in the evenings. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 Laundry is carried out in house by the matrons and the boarders appreciate the efficient service offered. The boarders are able to obtain a wide range of personal items and stationery through the houseparent. A small minority of boarders indicated in response to the questionnaire that their belongings are not safe. The inspection team judged that measures to protect their personal possessions are appropriate: money and valuables are locked away securely by the house staff. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders are offered an appropriate range of organised activities that they enjoy, including Japanese, animation, 'courtroom drama' and a variety of sports. Evening activities solely for the boarders are less formal, although some voluntary sessions are provided. The boarders spoke positively of the outings that take place on two Sundays each term and indicated that they would like more. In response to the questionnaires, a small minority expressed dissatisfaction with the balance of free time and activities, and in interviews they confirmed that they were referring to the Sundays when off-site visits are not scheduled. There is a range of safe and well-maintained indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and numerous places where boarders can go to be alone. Boarders have access to newspapers and news from the internet. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 A thorough health and safety policy is implemented effectively, and the premises are maintained to ensure a safe working environment for the boarders. The procedures for promoting safety when on and off the premises address all reasonable risks. All boarders are escorted to facilities, such as the teaching blocks, swimming pool and dining hall, which are located across the road. Suitable audits and maintenance tests are undertaken regularly. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school meets all statutory responsibilities regarding fire precautions. Fire drills are held regularly during the day and at night, and boarders and staff are fully aware of the appropriate evacuation procedures. Records are up to date and efficiently kept, and fire equipment is regularly inspected and maintained. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The safeguarding policy is known to staff at all levels; it complies with official guidance and is implemented consistently. The designated officer for child protection has undertaken the appropriate training, as have all staff, and close links have been forged with the local safeguarding children's board. Any concerns about individual boarders are handled sensitively and detailed records are kept. The school trustees review and ratify the child protection policy on an annual basis. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Relationships between boarders and boarding staff are strong and positive. In response to the questionnaire, a small minority of boarders indicated that they do not get on well with each other in the house, but in interviews they explained that this is often due to minor disagreements that are quickly resolved. The promotion of good behaviour amongst pupils, with due emphasis on promoting positive values, is covered across a range of policies. Boarders have a clear understanding of how these procedures operate, although a few commented in questionnaire responses that the issuing of rewards and sanctions is not always fair. From scrutiny of

behavioural records, inspection findings did not support this view. In discussions, boarders were clear in their view that there is no bullying behaviour in the house. Appropriate policies are in place for searching pupils or their possessions and for the use of physical restraint. [NMS 12]

- 3.14 The school operates safe recruitment procedures and the central register of appointments is maintained accurately. All necessary staff checks are undertaken before appointment. No individuals over the age of 16 who are not employed by the school live on the premises. All visitors are appropriately supervised. The school does not appoint 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 A statement of boarding principles is provided on house notice boards for the boarders and to parents and staff in the boarding handbooks. These principles are accurately reflected in current practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The management of boarding is effective and ensures that careful links are established between academic and boarding staff. Clear communication between duty teams and resident staff is facilitated through use of a handover book. Regular staff meetings within both the boarding community and the whole school enable information about boarders to be shared sensitively. The school maintains secure records in relation to boarders' education and welfare. These are thorough and include matters of care, conduct, health and medication, as well as academic progress. In response to their pre-inspection questionnaire, parents unanimously praised the organisation and management of boarding. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Staff who work in the boarding houses have relevant job descriptions and regular assessments of their contribution to the boarding life of the school. They have access to suitable training, both within and outside the school, and new staff are given an appropriate induction in boarding procedures. A suitable number of staff are responsible for the supervision of boarders outside teaching time, throughout the school grounds and on off-site visits. Duty rotas of suitably qualified and experienced staff are displayed on the house notice boards and boarders are aware of who is responsible for them. Thorough procedures for signing in and out ensure that the boarding staff know the whereabouts of boarders at all times. Staff are aware of the steps to be taken should a boarder go missing. In both boarding houses, at least one adult member of staff sleeps overnight in boarding accommodation and the boarders know how to contact this person should the need arise. Accommodation provided for boarding staff provides them with suitable privacy and boarders do not have access. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Staff are clear about their responsibilities for ensuring that boarders have equal opportunities. Staff records and frequent discussions about the needs of boarders are thorough, and reflect the school's clear pastoral support systems. In discussions, boarders reported that staff treat them fairly and without discrimination. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In response to the questionnaire and in discussions, a large majority of boarders expressed their enthusiasm for and enjoyment of boarding. Boarders' views are gathered through the school, boarders' and food councils, a complaints and comments book and a 'worry box'. Whilst most boarders feel that they are listened to, a small minority expressed in responses to the questionnaire that they are not

fully sure of the actions taken as a result of their suggestions and would like more frequent updates on outcomes. [NMS 17]

- 3.21 The school's policy for parents' complaints is available on its website and clearly sets out the procedures to follow. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The prefect system is organised so that both houses have an overall head of house, supported by a house prefect. Prefects' duties are clearly defined and they are expected to be good role models. They understand that any difficulties that arise with other boarders must be passed to the appropriate house staff for resolution. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for its pupils. [NMS 20]