



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**WARMINSTER SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Warminster School

Full Name of School	<b>Warminster School</b>
DfE Number	<b>865/6009</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1042204</b>
Address	<b>Warminster School Church Street Warminster Wiltshire BA12 8PJ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01985 210100</b>
Fax Number	<b>01985 214129</b>
Email Address	<b>admin@warminsterschool.org.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Mark Mortimer</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>The Right Hon Sir David Latham QC</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>508</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys and Girls (308 boys; 200 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): <b>40</b> 5-11: <b>129</b> 11-18: <b>339</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>317</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>191</b> Full: <b>190</b> Weekly: <b>1</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>09 Feb 2016 to 11 Feb 2016</b>

## PREFACE

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.

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 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, 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 Pamela Leech	Reporting Inspector
Mr Rupert Blencowe	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Boarding, IAPS school)
Mr Jeremy Wyld	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Headmaster, IAPS school)

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Founded in 1707, Warminster School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged 3 to 18, situated on the edge of the ancient market town of Warminster in Wiltshire. The school comprises the Nursery, Pre-Prep, Prep School and Senior School, all situated on adjoining sites. Members of the governing body, responsible for the preparatory and senior schools, are the directors of Warminster School, which is a charitable educational trust. Since the previous inspection there have been some changes in the senior management and governing body of the school, with a new headmaster and chair of governors. A recent purchase of a boarding house, combined with a rearrangement of existing boarding facilities, has resulted in a change in accommodation for junior boarders.
- 1.2 The school's mission is to provide a stimulating and caring environment and a genuine community in which pupils are encouraged to fulfil their academic potential and develop personal qualities of kindness, compassion, integrity, intellectual curiosity and self-esteem. The school seeks to ensure that pupils are self-confident, resilient and well prepared for the challenges of modern life. Through its Church of England foundation, the school aims to promote the universal values of tolerance and service to others, and in this spirit, welcomes pupils of other faiths and denominations, and of none.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 508 pupils were on roll: 308 boys and 200 girls. In the Nursery, Pre-Prep and Prep School there were 137 pupils, and there were 371 in the Senior School, 116 of these in Years 12 and 13. A total of 191 pupils were boarders, including 113 boys and 78 girls. Pupils may board from Year 4 and are accommodated in five houses on the campus. Senior boys are housed in St Boniface and St Denys, and senior girls in Stratton. Junior boys live in the Old Vicarage and junior girls in Ivy House. The majority of boarders are international, representing a wide range of countries, and 68 pupils receive support for English as an additional language. The school has identified 47 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities; of these 10 are boarders. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- 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 2015.

### **(ii) Recommendation for further improvement**

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that the school appropriately listens and responds to the requests of boarders.

### **(iii) Progress since the previous inspection**

2.3 Two discrete integrated inspections were undertaken by ISI in January 2013 for the preparatory and senior schools. Appropriate residential accommodation and staffing are now in place for younger boarders, who now occupy new premises, meeting the recommendation from the previous inspection of the Prep School. Sufficient isolation facilities are available in all boarding houses for unwell boarders, successfully fulfilling the recommendation from the previous inspection of the Senior School.

### **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 Boarders are supported by a comprehensive induction programme. Before joining the school, they receive a helpful handbook, and on arrival they benefit from a 'buddy' system in addition to staff and prefect guidance and tours. Most boarders responding to the questionnaire stated that they know whom to contact should they need help or advice and how to contact them. House notice boards display a variety of contact details, including those for national agencies and the independent listener. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Suitable medical policies are consistently implemented and ensure that the physical and mental health and emotional well-being of boarders are promoted. All house staff are qualified in first aid. Appropriate accommodation in each boarding house, including washing and toilet facilities, is provided for boarders who are unwell, fully meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection. Medication is securely stored in the medical centre and in the boarding houses. The administration of medication is correctly recorded and prescribed medicines are given only to the named boarder. The medical centre is staffed during the day by a qualified nurse and telephone advice is readily available during evenings and weekends. Boarders are registered with a local doctor who visits the school once a week in addition to holding regular clinics at the nearby surgery. They have access to dental, optometric and other specialist services as required. Confidentiality and rights of boarders as patients are respected, and boarders deemed sufficiently responsible are allowed to self-medicate. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 While there is some variability of signal strength across the houses in sleeping accommodation, discussions with boarders showed that it is easy to keep in contact with parents and friends through the internet and house landlines, as well as using mobile telephones in areas of the houses where the signal is strong. The school has proportionate systems to monitor the use of electronic devices during term time. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding houses are reserved for the sole use of boarders and are secure from unauthorised access. Monitoring systems do not intrude on the privacy of the boarders. Boarding houses are well furnished and appropriately heated, clean, lit and maintained. Each boarding house has a sufficiency of bathrooms and toilets which provide appropriate privacy. Boarders sleep in suitably sized rooms that reflect their ages, and are able to personalise their private space with pictures and other items. They have suitable work facilities within their rooms, and other areas for private study with internet access are available. Houses have attractive communal spaces where boarders can relax and socialise with each other, and every parent responding to the questionnaire felt that their children are well looked after at school. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a majority of boarders said that they were not happy with the food and a small minority of boarders indicated their dissatisfaction with the availability of drinking water and snacks. Inspection evidence does not support these views. Meals are prepared hygienically, and are well cooked, plentiful and nutritious, with a wide choice of options. Special diets are catered for and boarders are helped to make appropriate choices through individual guidance given by catering staff. Drinking water is always available and an ample daily provision of varied snacks including bread, milk and fresh fruit is delivered to



the houses. Well-equipped kitchen areas in the boarding houses allow boarders to prepare meals in the evenings and at weekends if they wish. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 The school provides appropriate central laundry provision and senior boarding houses have additional facilities that allow older boarders to wash their own clothes. A small minority of boarders stated a concern regarding the safety of their belongings. This was not supported by inspection evidence. All boarders have a lockable space within their bedrooms for the safe storage of their possessions, and valuables and passports may be handed to house staff for safe keeping. Boarders are able to obtain personal and stationery items from the school shop or from local shops. Official guidance is followed in the unlikely event of needing to search boarders' possessions. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 In their responses to the questionnaire, a minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the balance of free time and extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Inspectors found that the balance is appropriate, with a variety of activities on offer in the evenings and at weekends. Additionally, boarders have access to a well-equipped, staffed gym and a range of outdoor areas across the campus. Organised trips to local venues are a weekend option for boarders, or they may spend time in their houses relaxing or working. Boarders use the internet, library and newspapers to keep in touch with events in the wider world. [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 effectively implements appropriate written policies and procedures for health and safety. Risk assessments for boarding houses and all areas of the school are completed and reviewed regularly, and include suitable assessments for on-site and off-site activities, educational trips and visits. Effective monitoring is ensured through regular health and safety committee meetings, with governor oversight. Appropriate tests and checks are regularly undertaken, with records correctly stored. Buildings, facilities, accommodation and grounds are appropriately maintained to ensure the welfare, health and safety of boarders. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Fire safety policies and procedures are appropriate and effectively implemented. Fire prevention equipment is regularly tested and maintained, with suitable records correctly stored. A suitable number of staff receive training in fire safety procedures, with frequent refresher sessions. Fire drills take place twice a term in boarding time and are suitably recorded. Emergency exits from boarding houses are kept clear and are easily accessible. Outside lighting is sufficient and routinely maintained. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school has, and effectively implements, an appropriate safeguarding policy. Senior managers liaise with the governing body to produce an annual safeguarding analysis of policy and procedure. Staff receive annual safeguarding training, with a session every third year with an external provider. New staff receive a thorough induction that includes child protection training based on current official guidance. Designated staff are trained at the appropriate level and positive links with local agencies are maintained. Records are suitably updated and correctly stored. All senior boarders are given safeguarding and leadership training, and younger boarders with positions of responsibility receive appropriate guidance. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Throughout the school and boarding houses, there are suitably high expectations for behaviour and the school implements appropriate policies to underpin and promote

good conduct. A small minority of boarders in their responses to the questionnaire did not feel that teachers are fair in the way they give rewards and sanctions. School and house records show that good behaviour is properly recognised and rewarded in line with the school's policy, and that sanctions are appropriate, consistently applied, and carefully recorded and monitored. A very small minority of boarders indicated that the school does not handle instances of bullying well. Inspectors found that the anti-bullying policy is comprehensive and suitably implemented. Records show that any instances of bullying are dealt with appropriately. In discussions with inspectors, boarders confirmed that instances are rare and that adults quickly and effectively intervene. A very large majority of parents supported this view. There is a suitable cyber-bullying policy and boarders benefit from a carefully designed programme showing them how to keep safe online. Clear guidance is given to staff as to when restraint may be used, and suitable policies for searching boarders and their possessions are available. [NMS 12]

- 3.14 The school has appropriate policies and procedures for safer recruitment and these are effectively implemented. Thorough checks are carried out and correctly recorded on a central register of appointments. The school undertakes appropriate checks on spouses, partners and other members of staff households resident in boarding houses, and suitable agreements are implemented. Visitors, including for maintenance visits, do not have unsupervised access to boarding houses. The school does not appoint guardians. The vast majority of parents responding to the questionnaire stated that the school keeps their children safe. [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 comprehensive statement of the school's aims, boarding principles and practice is published on the website and in boarding handbooks. This statement accurately reflects current practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Governors and senior managers work hard to ensure that boarding standards are upheld and offer appropriate support to boarding staff. Senior leaders demonstrate good skills, knowledge and experience, and take appropriate action as necessary to successfully meet the needs of boarders, actively promote their well-being and ensure that all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools are met. Senior house staff meet regularly with senior managers and in turn with their respective house teams to discuss the individual needs of boarders. House diaries and handover meetings ensure appropriate communication amongst residential staff, and tutors provide an effective link between the boarding house and the academic staff. Required records and policies are correctly maintained and checked, with appropriate action taken by senior staff. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a large majority of parents indicated that they feel boarding is well managed. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Boarding staff have suitable job descriptions, reflecting their roles, and receive annual appraisals of their boarding practice. Staff benefit from a variety of professional development opportunities. Supervision arrangements for boarders outside teaching time are appropriate and boarders are, at all times, under the responsibility of an identified, suitably qualified member of staff. Staff know the whereabouts of the boarders in their care and duty staff are easily contactable by boarders. Staff are aware of the procedure to follow in the unlikely event that a boarder goes missing. A member of staff is on duty overnight in each house, who boarders can contact with ease should the need arise. Suitable accommodation is provided for residential staff which is appropriately separated from the

- accommodation and facilities provided for boarders. Boarders do not have access to staff accommodation. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders do not encounter discrimination for any reason, and are tolerant of each other. Older and younger boarders integrate successfully and boarders feel that they can turn to each other as well as to staff members. Older boarders take pride in their relationship with younger boarders. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 A small minority of boarders in their responses to the questionnaire stated that the school does not listen or respond to their views. Inspectors found that there are opportunities for boarders to express their views through the house council, through daily meetings and through their prefects. Boarders may also voice their opinions through daily informal communication with house staff. In discussions with inspectors however, boarders were unable to give many examples of where their opinions have resulted in change, and inspection found that although boarders may voice their opinions, the school does not always listen or respond positively to them. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 A very small minority of parents stated that their concerns are not always handled well. Inspection evidence does not support this view. The school follows an appropriate written complaints procedure that meets all requirements and correctly identifies any complaints specific to boarding. Records are appropriately kept and responses are timely. [NMS18]
- 3.22 The role and duties of the prefects are clearly stated, and prefects receive appropriate training and support to enable them to undertake their duties with confidence. Younger boarders in particular are happy to approach prefects for help and advice. Prefects work closely with house staff and this ensures that there is no abuse of their roles. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20]