



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**BEDSTONE COLLEGE**

**BOARDING WELFARE**

**INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	<b>Bedstone College</b>
DfE Number	<b>893/6000</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>528405</b>
Address	<b>Bedstone College Bucknell Shropshire SY7 0BG</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01547 530303</b>
Fax Number	<b>01547 530740</b>
Email Address	<b>pa@bedstone.org</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr David Gajadharsingh</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Gp Captain Jon Fynes (RAF Retd)</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>240</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (126 boys; 114 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>0</b> 5-11: <b>54</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>14</b> 11-18: <b>172</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total: 154</b>
Number of Boarders	<b>Total: 86</b> <b>Full: 86      Weekly: 0</b>
Inspection dates	<b>02 Oct 2012 to 04 Oct 2012</b>

## 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. 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 September 2009 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 chair of 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

Mrs Deborah Newman

Mrs Timothy Halsall

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding  
(Principal, Society of Heads school)

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

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

- 1.1 Located in a rural area of Shropshire close to the borders of Herefordshire and Powys, Bedstone College, founded in 1948, is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged three to eighteen. The school, a Christian foundation, believes that each child has the ability to excel in some area. Its motto is 'Caritas', meaning 'Charity of spirit; an altruistic love for all', and self-discipline, mutual support and consideration are core values. The school intends each boarding house to feel like an extended family under the guidance of its house parents. The school is a charitable trust, with the board of governors acting as trustees of the limited company.
- 1.2 Currently there are 240 pupils enrolled, of whom 68 are in the Preparatory Department. Eighty-six boarders are accommodated in the four boarding houses occupied at present, two for boys and two for girls. Bedstone House accommodates 18 girls in Years 6 to 10, and 18 older girls live in Wilson House. There are 25 boys in Years 8 to 10 and Year 12 in Rutter House, while Pearson House provides for 25 boys in Years 11 and 13. The boys' houses occupy upper floors in the main building and the girls' houses are close by in the grounds.
- 1.3 The school has a wide ability range. The majority of sixth-form leavers proceed to higher education. Currently, 31 pupils receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The majority of pupils come from within a 30-mile radius of the school; approximately a third of boarders are from service families. The school also caters for 46 pupils from overseas, of whom 24 require extra lessons for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.4 The current headmaster was appointed in 2011. Since the previous inspection, there has been investment in new sporting and creative facilities. A head of boarding has been appointed, a new tutorial system established and a pupil school council created.

- 1.5 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.

***Preparatory Department***

School	NC name
PPN	Nursery and Reception
PP1	Years 1 and 2
P1-	Year 3
P1+	Year 4
P2	Year 5
P3	Year 6

***Senior School***

School	NC name
1 <sup>st</sup>	Year 7
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Year 8
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Year 9
4 <sup>th</sup>	Year 10
5 <sup>th</sup>	Year 11
Lower 6	Year 12
Upper 6	Year 13

## **2. SUMMARY**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

2.1 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, and therefore it must:

- ensure that all dormitories have equal assurance of privacy [National Minimum Standard 5, under Boarding accommodation];
- ensure that the safeguarding policy is reviewed annually by governors and that all staff receive appropriate training upon joining the school [National Minimum Standard 11, under Child protection];
- ensure that the school's policy to counter bullying is consistently implemented and incidents recorded in such a way as to identify emerging patterns [National Minimum Standard 12.1, under Promoting positive behaviour and relationships];
- ensure that there is clear management of boarding and that an identified individual monitors the consistency of practice between houses [National Minimum Standard 13.1, under Management and development of boarding];
- ensure that all records in Appendix 2 are correctly maintained and monitored [National Minimum Standard 13.3, under Management and development of boarding];
- establish procedures for the formal review of the boarding practice of boarding staff [National Minimum Standard 15.1, under Staffing and supervision].

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

2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Make full use of opportunities to respond to pupils' views, particularly on the provision of food and the range of available activities.
2. Provide training in child protection issues for boarders appointed as heads of houses who are not also prefects.
3. Review the consistency of expectations and procedures across the boarding houses.

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

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in September 2009. In response to the recommendations made, the school has since checked and improved safety measures within the boarding houses, provided staff training on diversity and equality issues, improved its complaints policy and taken steps to improve the privacy of public telephones used by pupils. House tutors have not had further training, but newly appointed house parents and Gap Year students are now required to undertake training. The recommendation on establishing reliable procedures for the monitoring of required records remains outstanding.

### **3. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS**

#### **3.(a) Boarding provision and care**

- 3.1 The school does not meet one of the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 There is a suitable induction procedure for all pupils and an orientation programme for boarders from overseas. New boarders are paired with more experienced boarders to help them settle in. For those who arrive late in the term, overall arrangements are appropriate but more informal. Pupils say confidently that there are numerous staff members to whom they can turn for help or guidance. There is a school counsellor and contact details of appropriate helplines are given to boarders. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Policies for the care of pupils who are unwell are in place. Some medical paperwork is being updated and at present different versions are in use. There are numerous staff trained in first aid. Suitable procedures are in place for the care of any boarders with chronic conditions and the administration of household remedies by boarding staff. The medical centre, staffed by a qualified nurse during the school day, provides separate accommodation for male and female boarders. Medical, dental, optometric or other appointments are organised as required. Prescribed medicines are appropriately stored and administered. Boarders are assessed before being allowed to self-medicate although there is inconsistency in the circumstances under which this may happen. Pupils' rights and confidentiality are respected. [NMS3]
- 3.4 Boarders report no difficulties or limitations in contacting their families, apart from those created by slow internet access because of the rural location. They may use the internet, for which safeguards are in place, or their mobile telephones at suitable times. Landlines are available in houses. The privacy of these has been enhanced, as recommended at the last Ofsted inspection. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation is clean and well maintained. Heating, lighting and ventilation levels are appropriate. Toilet and washing facilities offer appropriate privacy. Furnishings are suitable for the number, needs and ages of boarders, with separation by gender and age group, and accommodation for adults. Bedding is clean, warm and suitable. Boarders may personalise their rooms if they wish. Appropriate arrangements are made for private study and organised prep. Houses are protected from access by unauthorised individuals, although some dormitories are in less private locations than others. Security procedures and CCTV do not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 The school provides nutritious and varied food, including choices suited to specific dietary, medical or religious needs. In questionnaire responses, a significant number of pupils expressed dissatisfaction with the food. The school is improving its provision and the meals sampled by inspectors were appetising and enjoyable. Kitchens in the school and in houses are adequate and hygienic. Drinking water is freely available and boarders are able to make a limited range of snacks in the houses. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry is carried out daily and returned promptly. There are weekly shopping trips so that boarders can obtain necessary personal items, and house parents purchase such items at other times if necessary. Boarders have secure lockers in which to store possessions safely. Valuables and larger amounts of money are stored by the

school and pocket money issued to boarders as necessary, although there is some variation between the houses in the timing of this. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 Boarders have a choice of activities on two evenings each week. An outing is arranged for each Sunday. Many pupils told inspectors that they are not happy with the range and availability of activities outside the teaching day. Inspectors concluded that there is generous provision of sporting activities but agreed that other opportunities are limited. The campus provides many safe recreational areas including cheerful common rooms and places where boarders may be alone. Internet access, newspapers and televisions enable pupils to access information about outside events. All boarders can visit Ludlow at appropriate times. [NMS 10]

### **3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding**

- 3.9 The school does not meet two of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 Satisfactory policies and practice ensure that the health and safety of the boarders are suitably protected. Issues mentioned in the last Ofsted report have been resolved. Pupils state confidently that they feel safe and secure in their houses. Risk assessments for buildings and activities, including off-site trips, are in place and reviewed regularly. Any accidents are recorded and reported as required. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Appropriate policies comply with legislation to protect against the risk of fire. Fire alarms and equipment are tested regularly. Fire exits are clearly indicated and evacuation drills, some of them in boarding time, are carried out regularly and suitably recorded. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Child protection measures are in place. There are two suitably trained senior members of staff designated as child protection officers. They are responsible for ensuring that staff are trained at the required intervals. Some members of the support staff have not received appropriate training as part of their induction on joining the school. The safeguarding policy had not been subject to an annual review and did not reflect the most current legislation. A compliant policy reflecting local area procedures has now been put in place, and the school is ensuring that staff and parents are familiar with this. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school has a written policy to promote good behaviour and to counter bullying, which is understood by pupils and staff. The policy has not been consistently implemented nor incidents recorded in such a way as to identify emerging patterns. However, pupils say that there is little incidence of bullying and are confident that the school would deal with any unacceptable behaviour reported. In questionnaire responses and conversations, virtually all pupils said that they get on well together and enjoy boarding. They respect each other, trust their house parents, of whom they speak with affection, and are happy. They understand the school's disciplinary sanctions. Records of more serious sanctions imposed by the school are appropriately kept. Sanctions imposed in the boarding houses are not all equally clearly recorded. Policies on restraint and on searching pupils and their possessions are appropriate. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school operates robust safe recruitment procedures. All staff appointed are subject to the required regulatory checks. There are no individuals over the age of 16 who are not pupils or employees currently living on the same premises as the boarders. Visitors to the school are required to sign in and are accompanied by staff to guard against unsupervised access to boarding accommodation. The school does not appoint guardians but will provide parents with contact details of

guardianship agencies and ensures that its guardianship policies are fully implemented. [NMS 14]

### **3.(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision**

- 3.15 The school does not meet three of the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 The management of boarding is underpinned by well-defined aims that are clearly communicated to pupils, staff and parents, and work in practice. Strong emphasis is placed on relationships with pupils and parents, and the creation of a family atmosphere with mutual respect. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The school now has a development plan that highlights specific areas for the future development of boarding. Staff freely seek and appreciate the guidance provided by senior leaders. Management support is largely informal and not systematic. Consequently, there are inconsistencies between the boarding houses and in house parents' understanding of procedures. Effective links exist between boarding and academic staff. Senior boarding staff have good levels of experience and training. Records are kept, although, as mentioned in the last Ofsted report, these are not always adequately maintained and monitored, nor is it always clear when actions have been followed up. This makes it difficult for senior leaders to form an accurate, rounded view of boarders' progress and well-being. (NMS 13)
- 3.18 Boarding staff have job descriptions that accurately reflect their boarding duties. New house parents receive appropriate induction and training, including on issues of equality, as do boarding tutors involved in house duties. There is no formal review of boarding staff's practice, as recommended in the last Ofsted report, and house tutors have not had further training, though newly appointed house parents and Gap Year students are now required to undertake training. The roles of spouses in the boarding houses are clear. Experienced staff supervise boarders outside teaching time and boarders are always under the responsibility of an appropriate adult. Staff know the whereabouts of boarders at all times and are confident in implementing the school's policy on missing children. The house parents sleep in the houses every night and are easily contactable by pupils. Pupils do not have unsuitable access to staff accommodation. (NMS 15)
- 3.19 Boarders do not experience discrimination on any grounds and all boarding staff are sensitive to the needs of individuals. Liaison between boarding and academic staff ensures that there is a good level of support in the houses for pupils with SEND or EAL. (NMS 16)
- 3.20 A school council has recently been formed and it is intended that boarders will have an opportunity to represent their views on boarding provision. Pupils are comfortable in raising concerns and expressing their opinions to their house parents and feel that these are taken into consideration. (NMS 17)
- 3.21 The school now has a suitable complaints policy that is implemented as required and published on the website. (NMS 18)
- 3.22 In each boarding house are heads of houses, boarders appointed by the house parents. Unlike the school prefects, they have not received child protection training. They support the house parents by carrying out appropriate duties with some staff supervision and guidance. They take great pride in doing so responsibly. (NMS 19)
- 3.23 The school does not use long-stay lodgings. (NMS 20)