



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Queen's College

Full Name of School	Queen's College
DfE Number	933/6024
Registered Charity Number	310208
Address	Queen's College Trull Road Taunton Somerset TA1 4QS
Telephone Number	01823 272559
Email Address	ptc@queenscollege.org.uk
Headmaster	Mr Christopher Alcock
Chair of Governors	Mr Stephen Lawson
Age Range	3 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	761
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (388 boys; 373 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 169 3-5 (EYFS): 38 11-18: 554
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 546
Number of Boarders	Total: 215 Full: 215 Weekly: 0
Inspection dates	02 Dec 2014 to 04 Dec 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 2011 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, 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

Dr Stephen Bailey

Team Inspector for Boarding (Headmaster, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Queen's College is a day and boarding school, sited on the outskirts of Taunton. The school was founded in 1843 in order to educate Methodist boys and prepare them for entry to university. The school first admitted girls in 1972. The school provides for pupils aged between three and eighteen and has almost equal numbers of boys and girls. The school is a member of the Methodist Independent Schools' Trust (MIST) which oversees the school through the work of the board of local governors and has ultimate responsibility. There are five sub-committees each of which meets at least termly, as does the full governing body.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a caring Christian community committed to respecting each individual, their personal attributes and ambitions. It aims to uphold Christian values in practice while encouraging pupils to adopt a critically aware approach to the standards and values current in modern society. It welcomes those of other faiths with openness and tolerance.
- 1.3 There are four boarding houses. Cotlake, situated on the main school site, houses all boarders in Years 4 to 8. Older girls live in Hutton and its extension close to the school grounds. Older boys are accommodated either in Channon or School House, the latter being within the main school building. There are 141 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and they are supported by the EAL department. The school identifies 88 pupils as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and provides additional support for the 75 pupils who require it.
- 1.4 The majority of pupils come from within an hour's drive of the school. Of the 215 boarders, 137 come from a range of overseas countries, primarily Hong Kong, China, Russia and Germany. A number of UK boarders come from military families.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection, boarding house facilities have been refurbished. Some staffing of the houses has changed, including the appointment of increased numbers of resident staff.
- 1.6 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 medicine cabinets are always securely locked after each use.
2. Ensure that all houseparents make consistently good use of the wealth of information available to form a holistic view of boarders' lives and progress.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in March 2011. It made a number of recommendations relating to the catering provision, standard of accommodation especially for the youngest boarders, the monitoring of required records and procedures for safeguarding. The school has made satisfactory progress in each of these areas.

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 Induction for boarders includes documentation for them and their parents, and the designation of older boarders who help new arrivals understand routines and settle in quickly. Boarders identify many staff and some other boarders to whom they would go to share a problem. Boarders are provided with suitable contact details, including external helplines and an independent listener. The chaplaincy and the pastoral team offer discreet and effective care. [NMS2]
- 3.3 Appropriate policies are in place and implemented to care for boarders who are unwell. The medical centre is well equipped. Qualified nurses are on duty throughout the day and on call at other times. A doctor runs regular surgeries and appointments are made at local dental, optometric and other specialist services as necessary. Boarders' health records and individual care plans are detailed. Prescribed medicines are appropriately administered. There are suitable medicine cabinets, although occasionally these are not locked appropriately. Boarders may self-medicate if deemed competent to do so. Their rights and confidentiality are respected. [NMS3]
- 3.4 Boarders report no difficulties in communicating with family through a variety of methods including use of the internet. The school ensures that appropriate measures are in place to guard against unsafe use of computers. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Sleeping accommodation is appropriately separated by gender. Houses provide suitable common rooms for socialising and for study. Older boarders have study space in their bedrooms and sixth-form boarders may also use the new sixth-form centre. Toilet and washing facilities provide adequate privacy for boarders. Boarding accommodation is clean and well ventilated, with suitable lighting and heating, comfortable furnishings, and warm and clean bedding. Several houses have benefited from a programme of refurbishment; some areas are still waiting for attention. Boarders can personalise their living space. Boarding accommodation is protected from unauthorised access. Security arrangements do not impinge upon the boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of food and snacks provided. Inspectors judged that the school provides adequately for evening snacks and that meals are plentiful and nutritious, offering both choice and variety, although the range of provision at lunch time is better than that in the evenings. Boarders have access to drinking water and can make snacks and drinks in the evenings. Requirements for particular dietary provision on medical or religious grounds are met. The kitchens are clean and well maintained. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry arrangements are efficient. Boarders can purchase toiletries and stationery from the town. The staff will shop for the youngest boarders as necessary. The school looks after boarders' money and valuables, recording any pocket money issued. Older boarders are encouraged to open their own bank accounts. A minority of boarders reported in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire that their possessions are not safe. The school provides lockable furniture in bedrooms and some additional lockers elsewhere although not all boarders use them. The school

acknowledges that on occasion possessions have gone missing. It takes steps to deal appropriately with such occasions which do not reflect its overall culture of respect. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 A wide range of supervised activities during the week and at weekends is available and these are appreciated by boarders. Involvement is mostly voluntary with boarders being encouraged to participate. The houses and grounds provide plentiful safe spaces for socialising or for being alone. Access to local facilities is age appropriate. Televisions, newspapers and the internet enable boarders to keep abreast of world events. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.1 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 The school has satisfactory policies on health and safety and implements them successfully. Avoidable risk to boarders and staff is minimized effectively. Risk assessments for the boarding houses are carried out annually. All required testing procedures are carried satisfactorily. Risk assessments for school activities both on and off site are suitably rigorous. [NMS 6]
- 3.3 Appropriate measures are taken to prevent fire. Fire equipment is tested regularly in accordance with requirements. Clear signage and procedures for drills help to ensure boarders' safety. Evacuation drills are carried out at least once a term during boarding time. [NMS 7]
- 3.4 By the end of the inspection the safeguarding policy was fully compliant with the requirements for all sections of the school. The school's procedures give central importance to the protection and support of all pupils. The school has established relationships with the local safeguarding agencies and other professional means of supporting boarders who give rise to concern. These matters are properly recorded by the school and action taken as required. Medical staff and staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities work together and share information appropriately. [NMS 11]
- 3.5 The school's rules and written policies to promote good behaviour are understood by the boarders. They accept and respect them, showing consideration and integrity in their dealings with each other. They say that bullying is rare and managed promptly and effectively by the school. Sanctions and rewards are applied fairly. The school has had no occasion to use physical restraint. Policies on searching pupils and their possessions are followed when the occasion arises. [NMS 12]
- 3.6 The school has a satisfactory policy for the safe recruitment of staff, volunteers and governors which it implements when making any new appointment. All required checks are carried out before staff start work at the school and are correctly recorded. All non-employees living on site are also subject to the required checks and sign a declaration confirming their understanding of safeguarding procedures. Visitors have no unsupervised access to boarders or their accommodation. The school does not appoint or recommend guardians but requires parents to do so. [NMS 14]

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

- 3.7 The school meets all of the NMS under this section
- 3.8 The school publishes its boarding principles on its website and in documentation. The maturity and evident willingness of the boarders to accept responsibility shows that they are implemented effectively. [NMS 1]
- 3.9 There is clear management and leadership of boarding. Houseparents and senior leaders work together closely. Governors visit houses regularly. Houseparents are all suitably trained and many are very experienced. The required records are monitored by the school. At present houseparents make inconsistent use of appropriate recorded information to form a holistic understanding of a boarder's life and progress. [NMS 13]
- 3.10 New boarding staff are given induction training and all boarding staff have clear job descriptions. Their boarding practice is regularly reviewed and opportunities for relevant further training and professional development are given. Staffing levels ensure that there are always sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced staff on duty; staff know the whereabouts of their charges and can implement the missing child policy swiftly if necessary. At least one and usually two adult staff members sleep in each house nightly, easily contactable by boarders. Suitable accommodation is provided for staff, to which boarders have appropriate supervised access. [NMS 15]
- 3.11 There is a strong sense of community amongst boarders, who do not experience discrimination on any grounds. Tolerance and respect underpin relationships between boarders of all backgrounds. Boarding staff are sensitive to the needs of individuals. [NMS 16]
- 3.12 Pupil questionnaires indicated that a small minority felt that their views are not listened to by the school. Inspection evidence does not support this. Boarders have a number of ways to make their views known, including house meetings and school council. In conversations with inspectors, boarders said that they are comfortable in raising concerns and expressing their opinions, and feel that their views are taken into consideration. [NMS 17]
- 3.13 The school has a suitable complaints policy which is implemented as required and published on the website. [NMS 18]
- 3.14 In each of the senior houses prefects support the houseparents by carrying out appropriate duties with staff supervision and guidance. They take great pride in doing so responsibly. [NMS 19]
- 3.15 The school does not use long-stay lodgings. [NMS 20]