



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ARDINGLY COLLEGE

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Ardingly College

The preparatory school was inspected at the same time and separate reports published.

Full Name of School	Ardingly College
DfE Number	938/6200
Registered Charity Number	1076456
Address	Ardingly College College Road Ardingly Haywards Heath West Sussex RH17 6SQ
Telephone Number	01444 893000
Fax Number	01444 893001
Email Address	head@ardingly.com
Headmaster	Mr Ben Figgis
Chair of Governors	Mr Jim Sloane
Age Range	13 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	558
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (336 boys; 222 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 297
Number of Boarders	Total: 261
Inspection Dates	20 Jan 2015 to 22 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 representatives of the 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

Mr Rodney Fox

Reporting Inspector

Miss Margaret Pepper

Team Inspector for Boarding

Mrs Christine Rees

Team Inspector for Boarding
(Head of Boarding Compliance, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ardingly College was founded in 1858 by Canon Nathaniel Woodard, whose vision was to provide boarding education for boys in communities rooted in the Christian faith, as practised within the Catholic tradition of the Church of England. Today, the college is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils from the age of 2 to 19 and part of the Woodard Corporation, a family of 46 schools sharing the founder's vision. It is an educational charity governed by its trustees, half of whom are nominated by the corporation.
- 1.2 The college aims to enable boys and girls to develop their love of learning, academic potential and individual talents in a caring community that fosters sensitivity, confidence, a sense of service and an enthusiasm for life. The school retains at its heart the Christian values on which it was founded, welcoming pupils from across the world, from all religions and none. It sets out to foster young men and women, confident in their own faith and being, with a sense of justice for all and a desire to make a difference to the wider world.
- 1.3 The college consists of three sections — the pre-preparatory, preparatory and senior schools — sharing a 230-acre site near Haywards Heath in West Sussex, 12 miles north of Brighton. The original buildings, which date from the 19th century, have been continuously augmented to meet contemporary needs. Senior school boarders are accommodated in one of six houses, including a linked pair which provides a co-educational setting for boys and girls in Year 13. In addition, one of the boys' day houses can accommodate pupils who want the flexibility of boarding overnight. Each of the houses has its own premises and resident staff.
- 1.4 The headmaster has been in post since September 2014. The new house for both day and boarding boys and girls in Year 13 was opened in 2013 as part of an ongoing development of boarding accommodation. A new all-weather pitch is currently under construction.
- 1.5 Of the 558 pupils in the senior school, 261 are boarders, 157 boys and 104 girls. Most of the boarders either come from the south of England or from overseas, with a wide range of over 25 different nationalities being represented. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 82 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, of whom 32 receive specialist support; 131 pupils speak English as an additional language, 19 of whom receive help with their English language skills.
- 1.6 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 table.

School	NC name
Shell	Year 9
Remove	Year 10
Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

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. Augment induction arrangements for boarders from overseas.
2. Amend the arrangements made for girls' boarding so as to match more closely the house structure for girls and boys.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in February 2012. That inspection found that the school met all the National Minimum Standards and made no recommendations concerning boarding welfare and provision.

3. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

3.(a) Boarding provision and care

- 3.1 The school meets all the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 New boarders receive appropriate induction, starting with a day at school in the summer term. They arrive early for the autumn term and are supported by staff and other boarders. Many boarders from overseas miss the summer induction day so that, although documentation is available for them on the website, their induction is abbreviated. Boarders have a wide range of adults to whom they can turn for guidance, and the contact details for an independent listener and suitable helplines are published in house handbooks and on notice boards. In questionnaire responses and interviews, boarders expressed confidence that they know to whom they can turn for help. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Appropriate policies direct the care of boarders who are unwell. These include suitable guidance for dealing with chronic conditions and with medical emergencies. Only qualified nursing staff authorise the dispensing of medicines or household remedies. The medical centre provides appropriately separate accommodation and washing facilities for girls and boys. Sufficient trained staff are employed to keep the centre open at all times during term time. Boarders have regular access to a doctor in the centre, supplemented with a 24-hour on-call service. Local dental and optometric services are readily accessible. Counselling is available if required. Prescription medicines are kept in the centre and only dispensed to those for whom they are prescribed. Older boarders may self-medicate following appropriate risk assessment and authorisation by the nursing staff. The confidentiality and rights of boarders are suitably respected, including the rights of those deemed competent to give or withhold consent to treatment. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are easily able to contact parents and families by telephone or using the internet. House telephones provide access to free or low-rate overseas calls. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The sleeping accommodation in all the boarding houses is suitable. Girls and boys in Years 9 to 12 are accommodated in separate houses, with the girls in Year 12 based in a house designated for their year group alone. In interviews, a small minority of girls regretted this separation, of which the school is aware and is addressing. Boarders in Year 13 are accommodated in a linked pair of houses that allow boys and girls to mix freely during the day. All houses are appropriately equipped for private study and have spacious recreation areas. Toilet and washing facilities are sufficient and all showers are equipped with doors for privacy. Boarders in the Year 13 house have en-suite showers and toilets. Boarding accommodation is suitably lit and ventilated, and all rooms are clean, well maintained and appropriately furnished. Some houses have lifts that are capable of assisting access for boarders with restricted mobility. Clean bedding is provided weekly. Boarders can personalise their rooms with posters and photographs. Boarding accommodation is exclusive to those for whom it is intended, and visitors or members of the public are not allowed unsupervised access during term time. Closed circuit television cameras are fitted unobtrusively and do not invade boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Boarders with special dietary needs are individually catered for. Menus are rotated every three weeks to provide appropriate choice and variety. Meals are nutritious and of suitable quality. A small minority of boarders responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed some dissatisfaction with the food, although interviews with

boarders indicated that most enjoy the majority of provision, but that sometimes the food is not to their taste. The food committee provides appropriate opportunity for boarders to make their tastes known and has resulted in some changes. Kitchens are well equipped, spacious and clean. The kitchen and dining hall are located centrally in the school. Boarding houses all have suitably equipped kitchens, accessible to boarders. A sufficient variety of food and drinks is provided by the school for evening snacks. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 Each boarding house has a matron. Laundry is organised centrally and arrangements to return clothing to individual boarders are efficient, as was recognised by the boarders interviewed. The tuck shop stocks an appropriate range of personal items, including stationery, and shopping trips to town are organised if requested. Boarders can lock their bedroom doors and have a lockable cupboard in their bedrooms. All boarding houses have a safe in the staff office, where money or valuables can be deposited. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A wide range of activities is organised for boarders, both during the week and at weekends. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction with the activities programme. The extensive buildings and grounds provide many spaces both indoors and outdoors where boarders can safely be alone if they wish. No unusually onerous demands are made on boarders. Boarders have access to newspapers, radio, televisions and the internet. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The school has a detailed health and safety policy. All relevant safety checks and routine maintenance regimes are carefully conducted, meticulously recorded and suitably monitored. The school premises, accommodation and facilities are appropriately maintained at a level that promotes the welfare, health and safety of the boarders. Any risks posed by deterioration or damage are swiftly remedied. Suitable risk assessments are conducted for school premises, activities and planned trips. Effective oversight of health and safety is exercised by the governors, who ensure that they are kept well informed. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school complies fully with fire regulations. Fire evacuation practices are conducted regularly in boarding houses, including during boarding time. Fire safety appliances are regularly inspected and maintained. Fire risk assessments are reviewed annually. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy, which was amended during the inspection to comply with the most recent regulations. The policy is formally reviewed each year by the governors, who also monitor the effectiveness of its implementation. The minutes of their meetings reflect the care with which they fulfil this responsibility, but do not explicitly report their satisfaction with the policy and its implementation. All staff and volunteers are suitably inducted and regularly trained in child protection procedures. The school has established a constructive relationship with the local safeguarding agencies. Safeguarding records are kept meticulously and securely stored. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Policies to promote good behaviour and to combat any bullying are clear and suitably implemented. Boarders are confident that the school manages any incidents of misbehaviour or bullying well and that it is safe to tell someone should they be worried or unhappy. Guidelines for staff about the school's behaviour

policies and procedures are clear. Both staff and boarders understand them. [NMS 12]

- 3.14 The school is rigorous in following safe recruitment procedures for all staff and volunteers, and a comprehensive and accurate register is maintained of the checks made. The suitability of all persons over 16, not employed by, or pupils at, the school, who live on the same premises as boarders, is appropriately checked. Such persons are required to enter into a written agreement with the school which sets out clearly the terms of their accommodation and provides guidance on the school's expectations with respect to their responsibilities, and those of any visitors they may have, with regard to the safeguarding of boarders. Visitors to boarding accommodation are not able to gain access without being admitted and taken to the member of staff on duty. The school does not appoint guardians on behalf of parents. [NMS 14]

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

- 3.15 The school meets all the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 A suitable statement of boarding principles and practices is widely available, published in handbooks and displayed on house notice boards. The principles are evident in the daily practice of the houses. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Clear management and leadership of boarding practice are apparent. Introduced since the previous inspection, annual house audits, including boarder surveys, conducted by senior staff lead directly to the development and improvement of boarding practice and provision. The tutorial system, which is integral to the ethos of the school, ensures that effective links are made between academic and residential staff. All senior boarding staff are appropriately experienced and receive suitable training relevant to their needs. All the required records are maintained, monitored and acted upon as necessary. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All boarding staff have detailed job descriptions and receive suitable induction on appointment. Appropriate opportunities are provided for training and continued professional development, both in-house and through external courses. The role of spouses resident in the boarding houses is made clear in written guidance. Sufficient numbers of suitably trained and experienced staff are deployed outside teaching time to supervise boarders. Staff duty rotas are suitably displayed so that boarders know who is responsible for them at all times. Staff know the whereabouts of boarders in their charge. Registration and roll calls are conducted at intervals throughout the day, and all houses operate a suitable signing-in and -out procedure. Staff know the procedures to follow should a pupil go missing. At least one member of staff sleeps in each boarding house overnight and boarders are easily able to contact staff during the night. Staff accommodation is suitable to their needs and is appropriately separated from the facilities provided for boarders. Any access to staff accommodation by boarders is suitably supervised and does not involve inappropriate favouritism. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders reported that they do not experience discrimination. The care given by the boarding staff is sensitive to individual needs, in line with the school's aims. The considerate behaviour and respect within each house help to promote positive relationships between different cultural groups. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 The school council, with representatives from each year group, meets twice each term. This, together with house councils, the food committee, house meetings, a variety of surveys and informal conversations with house staff, provides suitable

opportunities for boarders to voice their views with regard to boarding provision. A small minority of questionnaire responses suggested that boarders' views are not listened to, although in interviews boarders gave examples of changes that have been made following pupil representations. Boarders are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. [NMS 17]

- 3.21 The school follows an appropriate complaints policy that, following minor amendment, conforms with regulations. It is readily available to parents on the school website. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 School and house prefects are appointed following a selection process. Their roles are clearly defined and they receive appropriate training in leadership skills and safeguarding. Regular meetings are held with senior staff to discuss issues that arise. Prefects do not dispense sanctions but have the support of staff should there be a need. In some instances senior boarders take significant responsibility in supporting other pupils, for example providing guidance for pupils from overseas as pre-International Baccalaureate representatives. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20]