



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**AMESBURY SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Amesbury School

Full Name of School	<b>Amesbury School</b>
DfE Number	<b>936/6052</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>312058</b>
Address	<b>Amesbury School Hazel Grove Hindhead Surrey GU26 6BL</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01428 604322</b>
Fax Number	<b>01428 607715</b>
Email Address	<b><a href="mailto:l.wright@amesburyschool.co.uk">l.wright@amesburyschool.co.uk</a></b>
Head	<b>Mr Nigel Taylor</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Tarquin Henderson</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>323</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (190 boys; 133 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>15</b> 5-11: <b>207</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>48</b> 11-13: <b>53</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>10</b> Full: <b>0</b> Occasional: <b>10</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>30 Sep 2014 to 02 Oct 2014</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, 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](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, and observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited the boarding house 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 Richard Johnson

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Cathy Gainer

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

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

- 1.1 Amesbury School is a co-educational school for children aged between two and thirteen. The school was founded in 1870 and moved to its current site near the village of Hindhead in 1917. It is set in 34 acres of grounds, and the original building has been extended to provide facilities that include a sports hall, specialist teaching areas and a performing arts centre. The school is established as a charitable trust administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 323 pupils on roll: 190 boys and 133 girls. There are 35 pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and all receive support from the school. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. No pupil requires support for English as an additional language. The majority of pupils come from professional families living in and around Hindhead, Haslemere and Farnham, and reflect the cultural population of this area.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a caring community by encouraging commitment, courtesy, co-operation, tolerance and compassion towards one another. In doing so, it endeavours to nurture a close relationship between home and school, and to develop in all pupils the necessary skills, aptitudes and abilities to enable them to move on successfully to their senior school. In pursuance of this last aim, the school provides opportunities for pupils in Years 6 to 8 to experience boarding for a week at selected times of the year. A maximum of ten pupils can board at any one time and this is managed so that pupils of the same age and gender board together. The boarding facilities are located in the main building, alongside the accommodation for the residential boarding staff.
- 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. Provide additional opportunities for boarding staff to undertake further professional development, including sharing good practice with fellow practitioners.
2. Introduce a wider range of female boarding staff in order to support the pastoral needs of girls who board.

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

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in March 2011. Recommendations were made concerning medical procedures, accommodation, staff training and the provision of an independent adult who can be contacted about personal concerns. These recommendations have been fully met.

### **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 parents of boarders are sent detailed information in advance of each session. An induction process for boarders takes place on the first day, when the programme for the week is explained to them, along with safety information. Boarders confirm that there are several adults to approach with personal difficulties or to provide guidance, including an independent listener. The relevant helpline contact details, including those of the Children's Commissioner for England, are displayed clearly in the dormitories. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Boarders with medical needs are cared for by the boarding staff, who have all received appropriate first-aid training. As all boarders live locally, their families can be contacted to collect them if they become unwell or require access to local medical, dental and other services should the need arise during their week of boarding. There is a member of staff on call every night in a duty room adjacent to the dormitories. Care is taken when household remedies are administered and prescribed medications are only given to the relevant boarder. Sufficiently responsible boarders may self-medicate, for example when using asthma inhalers. Medical records are handled sensitively and confidentiality is respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders can contact their family freely, using the boarding telephone within a private area. Email can also be sent during activity time. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The boarding accommodation is well maintained, well decorated and clean. There are two boarding rooms, each with five beds. Boarding groups consist of either boys or girls, so there are no issues concerning gender segregation. Heating and lighting are appropriate and the two newly refurbished shower rooms provide suitable privacy. The bathroom doors are lockable and can be accessed from the outside in an emergency. Bedding is colourful and boarders are encouraged to bring personal items such as a teddy, or favourite photographs. The boarding accommodation is protected from unauthorised access. External groups using school facilities are given clear guidelines as to the time and areas of access, and these do not include the boarding accommodation area. Boarders are suitably supervised at all times during the evening sessions. Security arrangements do not intrude unreasonably on the boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Meals are nutritious and prepared in hygienic conditions. Food is served as a buffet in the school dining room and all individual dietary needs are met. The boarders have additional snacks before bedtime. A water fountain is positioned in the corridor next to the dormitories. Some boarders report that the supper menu is not as varied as the provision at lunchtime. Inspection evidence showed sufficient breadth and balance in the food provided. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Bed linen is provided and laundered by the school. Personal laundry is taken home at the end of the boarding session. Personal items and stationery are provided by parents, and pupils confirm that they can telephone home if there is a particular requirement. Any valuable items are securely locked away by staff. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A varied programme of structured activities is provided for the boarders each evening, for which they have use of the school's facilities. Boarders report that they



enjoy these, in particular the opportunity to visit local sports centres and cinemas. The boarders' views are sought to ensure that the activities planned are appropriate for their age and gender. [NMS 10]

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

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 There is a thorough approach to all aspects of health and safety. The school has an appropriate range of policies that are implemented effectively, promoting a safe environment for boarders, maintained to a suitable standard. Risk assessments are accurately completed for all activities. Detailed records are kept highlighting any potential hazards, and appropriate measures to manage and reduce these are taken. A committee meets regularly and reports to the governing body to ensure that these standards are maintained. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Appropriate procedures are in place to minimise the risks from fire. Fire drills are held during each boarding session, some of which are at night. The alarm system is checked weekly, and an effective system of record keeping ensures that all safety equipment is regularly inspected and appropriately maintained. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Procedures for the safeguarding of boarders are understood and applied consistently by all staff. The safeguarding policy reflects current official guidance. The designated senior leaders have undergone the appropriate training, as have all other members of staff and volunteers. Safeguarding topics are regularly discussed at staff meetings so that all staff understand the need for effective child protection, and a strong collective ethos gives priority to the welfare and safety of the pupils. This is also recognised by the governors in the creation of a specific safeguarding committee, reporting each term to the full board, which carries out the required annual review of the implementation of the procedures. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Effective implementation of the school policies is in place to monitor and guide the behaviour of pupils in the boarding house. These promote positive values and are understood by both pupils and staff. The short nature of the boarding sessions means that some boarders take time to adjust to the evening routines in the dormitories, particularly at bedtimes. Boarders reported that this is suitably managed by staff so that they come to understand the importance of having adequate sleep. A small number of parents indicated the view that the school does not deal effectively with bullying incidents. Discussions with pupils and staff, and study of school records did not provide any evidence to support this, and an appropriate anti-bullying policy is in place which is followed in practice. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school accurately maintains a single central register of appointments. Safer recruitment procedures are followed conscientiously and all necessary checks are carried out before staff are appointed. Adults living on the school premises are also subject to the appropriate checks and relevant policies are in place to ensure the safety of boarders. Visitors to the boarding areas are adequately supervised to ensure that they do not have inappropriate access. The school does not appoint guardians for any of the boarders. [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 The school has a clear statement of boarding aims in the boarding policy, which is provided to both parents and pupils, and these are implemented in practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Those with responsibility for the leadership and management of boarding are effective in ensuring that suitable standards are achieved and maintained. Discussions with boarders indicated that they value highly the positive relationships with all staff in the boarding community. Communication between boarding and day staff is effective in ensuring that boarders' welfare needs are met. Senior staff monitor the boarding house carefully, and weekly staff meetings are held to ensure that concerns are discussed and any necessary action is taken. Records of meetings are maintained and shared amongst the relevant staff. Opportunities are now provided for the training and development of staff, although this does not include sharing good practice with other boarding schools. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All staff working with boarders have accurate job descriptions and thorough induction training, which includes clear safeguarding guidance. They are suitably qualified and experienced, and effectively deployed in sufficient numbers to ensure that all locations and activities are closely supervised at all times. Their performance is regularly reviewed against agreed criteria. At night, staff sleep in a suitable duty room adjacent to the dormitories so that they can be readily contacted at any time. There is a clear procedure to follow in the case of any pupils going missing and appropriate guidance on access to staff accommodation. The school recognises the need to involve a wider range of female staff in the pastoral care of girls in the boarding house. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 All members of the boarding staff are clear about their responsibility to ensure that all pupils enjoy equal opportunities. Discussions with boarders indicate their view that they are treated fairly by staff, and they showed an awareness of each other as individuals with differing needs. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 There are suitable opportunities for boarders to express their opinions through an online survey and verbal feedback at the end of each boarding session. This informs the further improvement and development of the boarding experience and boarders feel that the school is responsive to their ideas and suggestions. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school's complaints policy sets out the appropriate procedures to follow in the case of concerns, and is made available on its website. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 There is no system of prefects within the school, and pupils are not expected to undertake responsibility for others within the boarding house. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for its pupils. [NMS 20]