



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**WELLESLEY HOUSE SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	<b>Wellesley House School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>886/6001</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>307852</b>		
Address	<b>Wellesley House School 114 Ramsgate Road Broadstairs Kent CT10 2DG</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01843 862991</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01843 602068</b>		
Email Address	<b>hmsec@wellesleyhouse.net</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Simon O'Malley</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Timothy Steel</b>		
Age Range	<b>6 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>141</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (84 boys; 57 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>71</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	11-18: <b>70</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>36</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>105</b>	
	Full:	<b>38</b>	Weekly: <b>67</b>
Inspection dates	<b>08 May 2012 to 10 May 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 November 2008 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Children's social care/Boarding 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.

## **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**

Mr Ian Newton

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Elaine Brook

Team Inspector for Boarding (former Head, SHMIS school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Wellesley House School was founded in 1869 at Conyngham House, Ramsgate, as a boys' school. It moved to purpose-built accommodation on its current site in Broadstairs in 1898. In 1964 it became a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors, and in 1969 it merged with St Peter's Court School. It became co-educational in 1977. It remains predominantly a boarding school, offering both full and weekly boarding to pupils aged seven to thirteen. The headmaster has been in post since 2006. A number of improvements to the boarding arrangements have been made since the previous boarding inspection.
- 1.2 Pupils are admitted without academic selection and are drawn mainly from professional families in Kent, East Sussex and London, with a smaller number from overseas. Most are of white British origin with a mix of other ethnicities. At the time of the inspection the school had 141 pupils, aged from six to thirteen, of whom 57 were girls and 84 were boys. Of these, 105 were boarders. Thirty-two pupils had been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom one had a statement of special educational needs. Fifteen received support for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.3 The school's aims include providing high academic standards within a caring, family community where all children's strengths, not just academic ones, are nurtured and recognised. The school aims to open up a whole world of possibilities and makes communication with parents a high priority.
- 1.4 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
JH	Year 3
JB	Year 4
4k, 4L	Year 5
3, 3A	Year 6
2, 2R, 2A	Year 7
1, 1R, 1A	Year 8

## **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 the required checks are made prior to staff taking up their appointments [National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults];
  - ensure that all family members receive Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks when the school appoints guardians [National Minimum Standard 14.6, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults].

### **(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. Ensure greater consistency between older and younger pupils in the availability of hot drinks and snacks before pupils go to bed.
  2. Ensure that pupils understand how their suggestions to improve the school have been acted upon.

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

- 2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in November 2008. The school was recommended to improve staff awareness of child protection arrangements, to improve consistency in staff personnel files, to update job descriptions and provide more consistent access to appraisal, and to create more opportunities for boarding staff to meet together. It has made good progress in meeting these recommendations.

### **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 New boarders are made welcome by both staff and pupils, and feel quickly integrated. They find the new boarders' handbook helpful, and those arriving in September enjoy meeting other pupils beforehand at the summer term party. Pupils appreciate the many staff they can turn to for guidance or with a personal problem. In addition, they are given a wide range of external contacts to whom they can talk, including two independent listeners and the Children's Rights Director. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Pupils are very well cared for medically. Many staff hold first aid qualifications and first aid kits are readily available where there is special risk, such as at matches. Medical arrangements are overseen by two registered nurses, with much of the morning and evening care provided by matrons and house staff. Proper attention is given to pupils with chronic conditions and careful oversight is given to the small number of pupils who self-medicate. Detailed records are kept of the issue of medicines, and these are carefully monitored by nursing staff. Proper medical records are maintained for pupils, incidents and accidents. Boarding houses provide separate, comfortable and appropriately staffed accommodation for pupils who are ill overnight. Pupils needing treatment beyond school are escorted to the appropriate specialist service. Pupils' confidentiality is always respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Pupils say that access to their parents is generally easy since, in addition to landlines, the school provides mobile phones, on which parents can ring their children. Overseas parents are able to use internet chat. The school restricts pupils' use of their own phones to deter inappropriate use. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation is homely and comfortable, with tasteful decoration and imaginative use of old buildings. It is well maintained, heated and cleaned, with attractive dormitories and common rooms. Pupils of different ages and genders are accommodated in different areas with the girls, in particular, appreciating the attractive setting of their accommodation beyond the orchard. Similarly, junior boarders enjoy their jungle-themed common room. Houses are well furnished, and almost all pupils take the opportunity to decorate their bed-space, creating a sense of personal identity. Adequate study space is provided. Toilet and shower facilities provide appropriate privacy, with pupils particularly appreciating those recently refurbished. No outside groups have access to boarding areas and the only CCTV surveillance equipment is outside and not intrusive. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Although a significant number of pupils criticised the food in the pre-inspection questionnaire, menus are varied and well balanced, and pupils particularly enjoy breakfast and lunch. Choices include vegetarian, salad and fruit options, although not all pupils take full advantage of these. Appropriate provision is made for specific dietary needs. Meals are prepared in a hygienic and well-equipped kitchen. Drinking water is always available. Snacks are provided at morning and afternoon break and fruit is available until boarders go upstairs in the evenings. Older pupils enjoy additional opportunities to have hot drinks and light snacks. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Pupils spoke highly of the laundry arrangements, which provide clean bed linen and clothes. Stationery items are easily available. Pupils said that their lockers are



respected as being private by both staff and pupils; any valuable items can be safely held by staff. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 Pupils much enjoy the extensive range of activities after school and at weekends. They also enjoy playing and relaxing in the attractive grounds. Organised evening activities range from boys' and girls' cricket, sailing and tennis coaching to carpentry, beekeeping and music; weekend trips include activities such as paintballing, motor racing and the beach. Pupils keep in touch with the wider world through newspapers and the internet. [NMS 10]

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

- 3.9 The school does not meet all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The school takes considerable care over health and safety, giving regard to relevant guidance. The health and safety committee makes regular reports to the governing body. Risk assessments are thorough, and no health and safety hazards were observed during the visit. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school has appropriate policies and procedures for preventing and dealing with fire. Regular fire drills are held both during the day and in boarding time, including at night. Fire equipment is checked meticulously. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Appropriate policies and procedures support careful attention to child protection and safeguarding. Both the designated person and all other staff receive the required training, ensuring that staff are aware of the action to take if an issue arises. The school liaises well with the local area designated person, seeking advice when necessary. Governors oversee this area carefully. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school strongly promotes good behaviour and respect amongst pupils. In turn, pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and effectively dealt with. Some pupils, and a few parents, feel that good and bad marks are awarded unevenly, with a greater focus on the bad. Inspection evidence showed that this was not the case. The staff receive appropriate guidance on the use of restraint and on how to search pupils' possessions, on the rare occasions when this is necessary. Pupils are polite and well mannered, contributing much to the family atmosphere valued by the pupils and their parents. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school meets almost all of the requirements for checking staff on appointment but, in a minority of cases, these have not been completed fully. During the inspection, action was quickly taken to correct the omissions and procedures are now more robust. The school creates a written agreement with family members in houses who are not employed by the school. Visitors are carefully supervised, especially in boarding areas. Most guardianship arrangements are made by parents, but on a small number of occasions the school places pupils directly with a guardian for a short period. These arrangements are monitored carefully, but full checks had not been carried out on all family members. [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 clear statement of boarding principles underpins the school's life and work, and is available to parents on the school website. It contributes much to the school's sense of community and purpose. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Boarding arrangements are carefully overseen by governors, through formal and informal visits. Policies are drawn up centrally, and key boarding staff meet at least termly to discuss common concerns and further development. House staff work well together, supporting a common ethos. Senior boarding staff are highly experienced, bringing much expertise to their work, and effective leadership to staff who assist them. Boarding staff keep appropriate records and communicate well with other teachers to ensure that all are aware of issues affecting pupils. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Boarding staff have clear job descriptions and expectations for when they are on duty; they show a real commitment to their work. There is extensive training in best boarding practice. The school organises an effective induction programme for all new staff, with ongoing training. Where relevant, the role of house staff spouses is well defined and they make a considerable contribution to house communities. Pupils are always under the responsibility of experienced staff, who understand their roles and the pupils' needs well. Staff know pupils' whereabouts and the school has an appropriate policy if any pupil should go missing. Boarding houses are well supervised at night and pupils can contact staff should the need arise. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and those with limited English are quickly integrated. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 The school canvasses pupils' views through suggestions boxes, the food committee and school council, together with informal discussion. These have led to a number of changes, although information about these is not always communicated fully to other pupils. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school has an appropriate complaints policy. The sample of files examined showed it to be implemented properly. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Dorm captains, appointed by staff, play an informal but valued role in overseeing aspects of dormitory life such as lights out. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20, not applicable]