



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Bedford School

June 2019



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School's Details

School	Bedford School			
DfE number	822/6002			
Registered charity number	1066861			
Address	Bedford School De Parys Avenue Bedford Bedfordshire MK40 2TU			
Telephone number	01234 362200			
Email address	info@bedfordschool.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr James Hodgson			
Chair of governors	Sir Clive Loader			
Age range	7 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1107			
	Boys	1107	Day pupils	849
	Boarders	258	Prep	401
	Upper	430	Sixth Form	276
Inspection dates	26 to 27 June 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Bedford School is an independent day and boarding school for boys aged 7 to 18 years. Originally established by Royal Charter in 1552, the school moved to its current site in a residential area of Bedford in 1891. It is divided into two sections: the Prep School for boys aged 7 to 13 and the Upper School which educates boys from 13 to 18. Overall responsibility for the school rests with the trustees of the Harpur Trust charity, whilst day to day governance is delegated to the Bedford School Committee. Since the previous inspection a new chair of governors has been appointed.
- 1.2 The school offers a range of boarding provision including full time, weekly and occasional options. Boarders are accommodated according to age in one of seven boarding houses.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school seeks to provide its pupils with a well-grounded, ambitious education which will instil four principal qualities: integrity, responsibility, curiosity and endeavour. It strives to encourage an atmosphere of kindness, friendship, collegiality and mutual respect and it is hoped that every boy will gain a genuine sense of self belief which will provide the strongest possible foundations for a happy and successful future.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come mostly from professional families living in Bedford, the wider UK and overseas. The school maintains a Christian ethos, but admits boys of all faiths and none. Data provided by the school indicate the ability profile of both prep and the upper school pupils is above average for pupils taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 128 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include dyslexia and dyscalculia, 86 of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 119 pupils, 92 of whom receive extra support for their English.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools ('boarding NMS'). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards, including the boarding NMS, may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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 specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the Prep School, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools, and in-line with the national average for maintained selective schools.
- 2.4 Results in IGCSE examinations have been higher than worldwide norms.
- 2.5 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2015 to 2017 have been above the national average. Results in International Baccalaureate examinations have been higher than worldwide norms.
- 2.6 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.7 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.8 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. All prefect systems operating in the school are suitably managed.
- 2.9 The standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.11 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.12 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff and proprietors

- 2.13 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised.
- 2.14 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.15 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.16 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.17 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any pupils with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. This also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.18 The standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.19 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.20 The standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.21 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.22 The standards relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

3. Inspection Evidence

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house meetings and a chapel assembly. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support area. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Bridget Windley	Reporting inspector
Mr Thomas Hales	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mr Robert Lobatto	Compliance team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Claire Bentley	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, IAPS, HMC school)
Mr Christopher Lee	Team inspector for boarding (Head of department, HMC school)