



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

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

**Berkhamsted Senior School**

**January 2022**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Berkhamsted Senior School			
<b>DfE number</b>	919/6005			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	310630			
<b>Address</b>	Berkhamsted School 131–133 High Street Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 2DJ			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 358000			
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@berkhamsted.com			
<b>Principal</b>	Mr Richard Backhouse			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Gavin Laws			
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	1340			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	1267	<b>Boarders</b>	49
	<b>Seniors</b>	901	<b>Sixth Form</b>	415
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26 to 28 January and 25 February and 24 June 2022			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Berkhamsted School was founded in 1541 under licence from Henry VIII. A girls' school was added to the foundation in 1888. The schools were amalgamated in 1996, together with the respective preparatory and junior sections. In 2011, following further mergers with local preparatory schools, Berkhamsted School became Berkhamsted Schools Group incorporating six schools for pupils between five months and 18 years of age, under the direction of the principal. The group is a charitable company limited by guarantee, whose trustees and directors act as the schools' governors. The senior school operates as a combination of separate single-sex schools, each on a separate campus, and a co-educational sixth-form school.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the main hall at the Castle site, and sports facilities at the King's site and at the Chesham Road playing fields, have been refurbished. Digital devices have been issued to all pupils in Years 7–13.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers. No boarders remained on site from 1 April 2020 to August 2020. During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.4 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.5 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.6 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the children of key workers or vulnerable pupils received remote learning provision at home. Overseas boarders who did not return home received remote learning at school or at the home of their guardians.
- 1.7 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed and teacher-assessed grades were awarded respectively.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.8 The school seeks to encourage pupils to aim high with integrity, be adventurous and serve others. It aspires to encourage enterprise and a spirit of adventure, responsibility, leadership and a commitment to service, and to foster moral and spiritual values through the Christian tradition of the school, placing emphasis on integrity, tolerance and respect for others.

### About the pupils

- 1.9 Day pupils are drawn mainly from professional and business family backgrounds in the surrounding area and north London. Boarders are drawn mainly from overseas, particularly the Far East. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in Years 7 to 11 is above average for those taking the tests. In Years 12 and 13, it is average for pupils in sixth-form education. Five pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC) and the school has identified 294 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly dyslexia, of whom 100 receive support for their learning. An additional 111 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), 29 of whom require language support. Pupils who have been identified as having particular abilities, gifts or talents follow specially adapted programmes of study.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Additionally, inspections report 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. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are 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 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 standards 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, and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2018 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2018 to 2021 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.7 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. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard 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

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.13 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**

- 2.14 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy 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.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

#### **PART 6 – Provision of information**

- 2.16 A range of information is 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 with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It 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.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

#### **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

- 2.18 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.
- 2.19 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.**

#### **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 2.20 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.
- 2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

### 3. Inspection Evidence

3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses, the medical centre and the learning support and educational resource areas. 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

Mr Alistair Telfer	Reporting inspector
Mr Stephen Cole	Reporting inspector
Mrs Diane Gardiner	Assistant Reporting inspector
Mrs Astrid McAuliffe	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Simon Worthy	Compliance Team inspector (Director of finance and operations, HMC school)
Mr Matt Oakman	Team inspector for boarding (Senior master, HMC school)