



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

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

**Wells Cathedral School**

**September 2018**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Wells Cathedral School			
<b>DfE number</b>	933/6029			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	310212			
<b>Address</b>	Wells Cathedral School 15 The Liberty Wells Somerset BA5 2ST			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01749 834200			
<b>Email address</b>	main-office@wells.cathedral.school			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Alastair Tighe			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	The Very Revd Dr John Davies			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	767			
	<b>Boys</b>	396	<b>Girls</b>	371
	<b>Day pupils</b>	477	<b>Boarders</b>	290
	<b>EYFS</b>	65	<b>Juniors</b>	141
	<b>Seniors</b>	375	<b>Sixth form</b>	186
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19 to 20 September 2018			

## **1. Background Information**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Founded in 909 AD, originally to educate choristers, Wells Cathedral School is now an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged between 2 and 18 years. It is a charitable trust and limited company and its governing body of ecclesiastical and lay members has proprietorial responsibility. The school offers places for talented young musicians who are eligible for funding under the Department for Education's music and dance scheme.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has built a new concert hall, installed a new artificial grass surface, established co-educational sixth form and junior boarding houses, expanded nursery provision to include pupils from two years of age and appointed a new headmaster.
- 1.3 Pupils can join the nursery following their second birthday, transferring to the junior school at the age of seven and join the senior school at the age of eleven. Boarders are accommodated in one of nine houses situated on site.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.4 The school aims to nurture a community where pupils are encouraged to discover and be themselves to the very best of their abilities. It seeks to promote an atmosphere where work, study, activity and spirituality are harmoniously combined in a creative mix within a family environment. Based on Christian values, the school welcomes pupils of all faiths or of none, inspiring them to meet the challenges of the future with courage, enthusiasm, resilience, optimism and philanthropy.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional and farming backgrounds, the majority of day pupils living within a 20-mile radius of the school. Half of the senior school pupils and some junior school pupils are boarders, with an even mix of British and international origins. Nationally standardised tests indicate the ability profile of the school is above average. The number of pupils identified as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is 184. One pupil has an education, health and care plan. There are 165 pupils who have English as an additional language, of whom 80 receive support. The school has identified 309 pupils as being the most able or having particular talents and the curriculum is modified for them, mainly because of their special talents in music and mathematics.

## 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. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. 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](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets almost all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements. In order to meet all the standards, the school should take immediate action to remedy the deficiencies as detailed below.

### PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2016, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2015 to 2016 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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; 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 admissions register has not been maintained as required as it does not record details of destination schools for leavers.
- 2.12 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 7, 9-14 and 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, and 15 and 16 are met, but those in sub-paragraph 8(b) [having regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools] and paragraph 15 [admissions register] are not met.**

### Action point 1

- **The school must ensure that it has regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools [paragraph 8 (b)].**

### Action point 2

- **The school must ensure that the admissions register records the name of the destination school (or additional school, in the case of dual registration) notified by a parent and the first date of attendance, where it is reasonably practicable for the school to ascertain this information [paragraph 15].**

## PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 **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 their 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.
- 2.16 **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. These include 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. They also include 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). At the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant.
- 2.20 The timescales provided in the school’s policy for the handling of complaints have not always been adhered to. Records of complaints are kept but these do not include a record of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, or identify those complaints relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.21 **The standards relating to the handling of complaints in sub-paragraphs 33 (a), (b), (d) to (h), (j)(i) and (k) are met but those in sub-paragraph 33(c) [implementing clear time-scales for the management of a complaint], and 33(j)(ii) [action taken by the school as a result of recorded complaints regardless of whether they are upheld], and in consequence NMS 18, are not met.**

### **Action point 3**

- **The school must ensure that it adheres to clear time-scales for the management of a complaint [paragraph 33(c)].**

### **Action point 4**

- **The school must ensure that records are kept appropriately, including identifying any actions taken, whether or not a complaint is successful and whether any complaints relate to the boarding provision [paragraph 33(j)(ii); NMS 18].**

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

- 2.22 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management actively promote the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.23 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management of the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the standards relating to having regard to some of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, the register of admissions and the recording of parents’ complaints, are consistently met.
- 2.24 **The standards relating to leadership and management of the school in sub-paragraph 34(c) and parts of NMS 13 are met but those in sub-paragraphs 34 (a) and (b) [knowledge and skills, and fulfilment of responsibilities]; NMS 13.3, 13.4, 13.8 and 13.9 [Management and development of boarding] are not met.**

### **Action point 5**

- **The proprietor must ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that: the school has regard to all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools; the school adheres to clear time-scales for the management of a complaint; and the admissions register and the record of complaints are kept appropriately [Part 8, paragraph 34 (a) and (b); NMS 13.3 and 13.4].**

### **Action point 6**

- **The proprietor must ensure appropriate leadership and management of boarding so that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored [NMS 13.8 and 13.9]**



### 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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

#### Inspectors

Mr Kerry Lord	Reporting inspector
Mr Sam Antrobus	Compliance team inspector (Chief executive officer, IAPS School)
Mr Peter Goodyer	Team inspector for boarding (Head, HMC school)
Mrs Victoria Jenkins	Team inspector for boarding (Head of department, IAPS School)
Mr Antony Johns	Team inspector for boarding (Head of sixth form, HMC school)