



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Bishopstrow College

January 2023

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School's Details

College	Bishopstrow College		
DfE number	865/6041		
Address	Bishopstrow College Bishopstrow Warminster Wiltshire BA12 9HU		
Telephone number	01985 219210		
Email address	enquiries@bishopstrow.com		
Principal	Mr Mario Di Clemente		
Proprietors	Mr M R Jeynes & Mr R C Freer		
Age range	7 to 17		
Number of pupils on roll	54		
	Day pupils	0	Boarders 54
	Juniors	2	Seniors 52
Inspection dates	24 to 26 January 2023		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Bishopstrow College was established in 2006 as a year-round, fully residential study centre for international pupils aged 7 to 17 years. The college provides English language, academic pathway and IGCSE programmes to prepare pupils for entry to independent boarding schools in the UK. The college has been owned and directed by the current proprietors since 2014. The current principal was appointed in January 2022. Since the previous inspection the college has acquired two new boarding houses for senior students.
- 1.2 The school is divided into three sections. Junior and middle college pupils live in a large house at the heart of the main campus, which also provides a separate suite of rooms for senior girls. Senior college pupils live in three further boarding houses located near the college.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to create a safe and positive learning environment so that pupils from a wide range of nationalities are well prepared for transition to a British boarding school. The five core values that underpin the ethos of the school are being kind, polite, and organised, hardworking, and learning to be a team player in readiness to contribute to wherever they may be in their future plans.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Up to 95 international pupils enrol each term from around 20 different nationalities. The school uses data related to English language learning and mathematical ability to monitor progression. Currently, one pupil has special educational needs and they are supported by the classroom teachers. No pupil has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for all pupils, who receive additional specialist help and the timetable is adjusted for any with particular talents.

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 FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection 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. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. 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 2022 and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided:

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 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. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and 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.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.6 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. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 3, 5–12, 15, 16 and 20 are met.**

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

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 19 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 4 and 7 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.15 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.
- 2.16 **The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.17 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.
- 2.18 **The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 **The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 2 are met.**

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils have highly positive attitudes and are eager to learn with a real willingness to participate when the opportunities arise.
- Pupils develop good knowledge, skills and understanding in academic subjects and effectively apply their learning to new situations.
- Pupils' rates of progress increase rapidly as they acquire new language, build confidence in their ability to communicate and begin to feel at ease in the language.
- Pupils' speaking, reading and listening skills develop well over time, but they do not consistently have opportunities to consolidate new vocabulary and extend their free writing.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.

- Pupils develop resilience and independence by being part of the boarding and school community so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils have a strong sense of the importance of decision-making and respond with maturity to planning for their future lives.
- Pupils are socially aware of others and their different experiences and enjoy the international nature of their community, but have limited time and opportunity to talk formally or informally to express their views.
- Pupils' health and well-being benefit hugely from the daily sports and activities time.
- Pupils' experience of equality and diversity issues is limited to the school community and they have little opportunity to involve themselves locally.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise and consolidate new language and to extend their writing to develop their fluency further.
- Provide pupils with opportunities and time to express their views more easily and more frequently.
- Develop opportunities for pupils to be involved in the local community and to extend their experience of equality and diversity issues.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupils make increasingly good and often excellent progress in English as a second language (ESOL) which is highly effective in supporting their learning across academic subjects. They develop good knowledge, skills and understanding and achieve well because carefully planned teaching supports effective learning. The quality of the teaching is a strength of the school with committed teachers who provide excellent support. Pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes and are focused and attentive. Those with a higher level of English productively discuss their ideas in most subjects with a clear understanding. For example, in an IGCSE science lesson pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of atomic structures and electron configurations with the teacher who regularly checked their understanding of words, such as 'arranged' to support effective learning. In business studies, pupils developed an excellent understanding of business specific language for product life cycles, and junior aged pupils made good progress in acquiring new language by singing confidently along to 'heads, shoulders, knees and toes' and through interactive board games. Middle school pupils accurately applied technical terms to further their understanding of geographical features on tectonic plates and similar aged pupils focused well in learning wire, pliers and ink roller in developing their Japanese black and white paper cutting techniques in art. Pupils communicated clearly in English to work as a team with teacher encouragement to remember to move into the space in an active netball match. Leaders and teachers fulfil the school's aims to ensure that pupils are well prepared and confident to move to the next stage in their education.
- 3.6 Examination results for a small number of pupils at IGCSE for 2017 to 2019 were above the average for UK pupils who sat the same examinations. Centre-assessed grades from 2020 and 2021 show results were consistent with this attainment. The small number of examination results taken by IGCSE pupils prevents reliable comparisons with national averages, but an analysis of results shows that many outperform expectations against their predicted grades, indicating consistently good and occasionally excellent progress. Pupils identified with specific learning needs are supported in class by their teachers. All pupils have an individual learning plan which helps direct their learning. Pupils' progress is monitored through careful tracking and assessment of their work. From regular weekly testing in English reading and writing tests to constructive feedback with targets, pupils are provided with a clear focus for independent work. Scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates a good volume of work and that progress rates increase over time from pupils' starting points. In discussions, pupils confirmed that they feel well prepared and are confident about moving forward. A small number of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, but all agreed that the range of subjects provided is suitable for their children and agreed that the teaching enables their children to make good progress.
- 3.7 Pupils develop increasing competency and confidence in English in their speaking, reading, writing and listening skills. Pupils confirmed that it gradually becomes second nature to conduct their daily living and learning in English, including in their understanding of the many idiomatic expressions used, such as 'take it with a pinch of salt' or 'on the other hand'. In class, all pupils work regularly on improving their knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures which aids their understanding for comprehension and examination techniques. This focus on the written word does not always allow for extended practice to develop speaking skills. Pupils listen attentively and respectfully to teachers; they work well together in pairs or in small groups. In a science lesson, older pupils made accurate predictions about acidic, neutral or alkaline substances and hypothesized on substances not tested, based on the practical elements of the lesson. In a session on imperatives and instructions, middle school pupils wrote confidently on the board, self-correcting errors and enabling others to check their work. During IGCSE history, pupils explored the reliability of sources to successfully explain the Nazi-Soviet pact. Pupils constructed clear written responses with teacher-led individual assistance. Junior pupils successfully identified adjectives related to the five senses in reading *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. All pupils read regularly within the set time which develops their fluency and helps them to begin to 'think' in the language. Conscientious pupils note new vocabulary and expressions which

supports the effective development of their written work. The scrutiny of work demonstrated some good examples of pupils' written work but fewer examples of extended, free writing.

- 3.8 Pupils' numeracy skills develop extremely well over time with good and often excellent progress as their English levels improve. They absorb specific subject terms with increasing ease and become more adept at applying their skills successfully across subjects as exemplified in a lesson, where older pupils confidently recalled different types of charts to choose the most suitable type of pictograph or chart to display data. In IGCSE science, pupils securely manipulated fractions of angles to successfully calculate frequencies with only a little prompting, and in middle school, younger pupils worked methodically to understand indices and exponents. Pupils confirmed in discussions that they confidently use mathematical methods to calculate graph gradients, to measure rates of reaction in experiments, and to calculate area and perimeter. They explained clinometers to calculate the heights of trees and topics for Maths Challenge such as Pythagoras theorem. Pupils are suitably challenged by their teachers and well supported when experiencing any difficulties and as a result are encouraged to persevere in their learning. Pupils complete a good range and volume of work, often being reminded to show their working and not only the answer. Teacher assessments provide ongoing progress with targets that allow pupils to focus independently on areas for improvement.
- 3.9 Pupils' information, communication, and technology skills (ICT) and study skills are well developed. They are highly adept in the use of electronic resources for subject specific research. In global perspectives lessons, older pupils researched the geographical features of two countries and produced visually attractive, informative computer presentations which summarised their findings effectively. They demonstrated strong vocabulary and spoke clearly throughout, accepting and responding effectively to questions. In an exam feedback session, middle school pupils shared their strategies with each other of underlining, skim reading and effective time management to achieve as high marks as possible, demonstrating a strong ethos of learning and a desire to succeed. Most pupils plan and organise their own work effectively and establish good working routines and habits. From the youngest age most develop positive study habits and the most conscientious are highly focused in note taking including vocabulary for revision work.
- 3.10 Pupils engage in extra-curricular activities including sports, drama, board games, chess and house competitions. Pupils have some success in mathematics challenges at the appropriate level for their age. Pupils interested in the arts participate in the newly formed debating club and take part in school debates and discussions which builds their confidence for presentations and interviews. With an interest in art, a small number of pupils develop a portfolio of their work which promotes their interest further in different artists, such as the Japanese artist, Noron. A small number of pupils play instruments to a high level and practise regularly in the school hall, filling the air with the melodious sounds of Bach preludes, enjoyed by all who stop to listen. All pupils take part in a range of sports and games, many new to them, extending their experience of participating and learning to be a team player. However, pupils' strongest achievement is their ongoing perseverance in learning and living a second language with the aim of becoming fluent and to continuing their education in English.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.11 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.12 Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem increasingly develop as they become more proficient communicators. This is due to their learning experience in the classroom with committed teachers who provide positive reassurance and encouragement so that they are never made to feel they are failing, no matter the limits of their language. In boarding, they are well supported by a committed team who encourage them to support each other so that they become independent and resilient in their learning and in their living. Pupils show high levels of engagement in their efforts to do their best and come to the realisation that only they can improve in their own learning. They demonstrate self-discipline and strength of character and with time become independent learners and thinkers.

- 3.13 Pupils have a strong sense of the importance of decision-making. Whether their decision entirely or not, they have travelled across the world, many on their own, to complete their secondary education, bringing a sense of maturity and ability to self-reflect. Most understand that the decisions regarding their next choice of school and subject choice, play a significant role in determining their future options. They understand that this requires determination on their part and confirmed that they work hard to achieve their best. In their questionnaires, a few pupils said that whilst they enjoy activities and reading time, they do not have sufficient free time during boarding time for all that they have to do which limits the opportunities to talk to family and friends. This same topic was also brought up in discussion in school with inspectors who in essence agree with their comments.
- 3.14 Pupils understand that there are people of different faiths and no faith. Older pupils studying global perspectives confirmed that the module on different beliefs helped their understanding of others in their boarding house. Most pupils found it difficult to express an understanding of the word spiritual but appreciate that peoples from around the world have differing customs faiths and traditions. They acknowledged in discussions that the mindfulness time in assembly supports their well-being and to think of family and friends helps them to think of being kind to others. They agree that friendship is important and expressed an appreciation of others' cultures and faiths and that difference does not limit acceptance of others. In weekly assemblies, pupils often lead on a topic, as observed when pupils led an assembly on prioritising vaccinations. This was well prepared and presented with clarity showing developing language and presentation skills, and highly positive as an example to younger pupils. Pupils have opportunity for prayer if they so request and are provided with an appropriate space.
- 3.15 Pupils have a clear understanding and ability to distinguish right from wrong and respect the rules of the school. Pupils commented in discussion that behaviour has improved since they arrived and that pupils learn to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and for any misdemeanours and sanctions imposed. Pupils learn to demonstrate a mature response and attitude to behaviour out of respect for others in their class and boarding house. They understand good behaviour is to support the school community so that the ethos of the school is upheld and harmony prevails. Most agree that the school teaches them through the personal, social and health education programme how to build positive relationships and friendships and this was evident in lessons and activities. The scrutiny of books showed that pupils had paraphrased the pupil code of conduct into their own words to show that they understand the school's expectations, an excellent opportunity to reflect on their behaviour for the good of all.
- 3.16 Pupils' social development and awareness are well developed. They collaborate well in lessons and share ideas in pair and group work. Older pupils show concern and support for younger pupils or those new to the school. Older pupils have been involved in helping younger pupils as buddies and in helping younger boarders in translating to clarify information in the boarding house. Pupils enthusiastically take part in inter-competitions winning points for their house, through gaining awards for one of the five virtues such as kindness or being polite. They are eager to be part of the community and to give to others when the opportunities arise. However, pupils have had few opportunities to collaborate in joint ventures to benefit others outside of school. The school are aware that pupils' social development would benefit from involvement, as before the pandemic, in the local community and hope to revive this. Pupils enjoy a wide range of trips and visits to places of interest in the UK which they confirmed extends their horizons and helps them understand life in the UK.
- 3.17 Pupils' behaviour towards their peers, staff and those with protected characteristics is respectful. They commented in discussions that racial, misogynist or homophobic comments are rare in school and if they occur, they are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils confirmed that a strength of their boarding experience is that they learn to live with others and to be tolerant and accepting but have fewer opportunities to celebrate the diversity of their community. Pupils have a clear understanding of democracy and the rule of law from their skills for life lessons and in culture club have covered

topics such as polite behaviours and social norms which they confirmed have been very helpful and supports their wider understanding of themselves and others.

- 3.18 Pupils have a strong sense of how to be physically and mentally well, in terms of a balanced lifestyle that includes a focus on exercise and the importance of a healthy diet. Pupils confirmed that they enjoy the school meals which provide a nutritious and healthy diet. A few boarders, particularly males, would like to have more to eat and they have been reminded that there are additional snacks in their boarding house. All play sport in school and in the local leisure centre which effectively supports their physical and mental well-being. Pupils said that the school is a safe place to be and almost all say they know how to stay safe online. Pupils write diaries every weekend with reflections on their lessons and can give feedback on topics they have covered. Leaders respond by ensuring that they cover or revisit topics and respond to any questions posed by pupils so that pupils are reassured and well supported.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Flora Bean	Reporting inspector
Mr Simon Worthy	Compliance team inspector (Director of finance, HMC school)
Mr Adrian Dellar	Team inspector (Deputy head HMC school)
Mr Ian Senior	Team inspector (Deputy head ISA school)
Dr Antony Johns	Team inspector for boarding (Former senior manager, HMC school)