



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**GODSTOWE SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE**

**INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Godstowe School

Full Name of School	<b>Godstowe School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>825/6007</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>540360154</b>		
Address	<b>Godstowe School Shrubbery Road High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP13 6PR</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01494429009</b>		
Email Address	<b>headmaster@godstowe.org</b>		
Head	<b>Mr David Gainer</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Kate Allner</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>446</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed to age 7, girls to age 13</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>59</b>	5-11: <b>269</b>
	11-13:	<b>118</b>	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>346</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>100</b>	
	Full:	<b>71</b>	Weekly: <b>8</b>
	Flexi:	<b>21</b>	
Inspection dates	<b>19 to 21 May 2015</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 previous ISI inspection was in May 2012.

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) Regulations 2014, as amended. 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.

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.

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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgement.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with boarders, held discussions with senior 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 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**

Mrs Bridget Windley      Reporting Inspector

Mrs Julie Jackson      Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Pre-Prep, HMC, IAPS school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Godstowe School is a day and boarding school for girls aged from three to thirteen and for boys from three to seven. Originally founded in 1900, the school is situated in twelve acres of parkland in High Wycombe. The boarders are accommodated in one of three houses according to their age. The school operates as a charitable trust overseen by a council of nine governors. Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed and the school has completed many refurbishments to the boarding houses. New facilities include a theatre, a multi-function sports hall and dance studio.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection the total number of pupils in the school was 446. There were 71 full boarders, 8 weekly boarders and 21 flexi-boarders. Opportunities exist for pupils from Year 3 to board either full time, on a weekly basis or for occasional nights. The school has identified five pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and thirty-three pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). Three pupils have educational health care (EHC) plans which are funded by a local authority. Boarders are drawn from families of professional and business backgrounds within the local rural and urban areas with just under half coming from further away and overseas. A range of different faiths and cultures is represented within the boarding community with approximately one third of the boarders having minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.3 Godstowe states that above all else it aims for its pupils to be confident, happy and successful. The school strives to keep its pupils busy, to entertain and intrigue them, encourage them, excite them, give them a curriculum as broad as it is deep, and give them skills for life. Godstowe is committed to the future of boarding in a friendly and homely environment.
- 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.

### ***Preparatory Department***

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 3
Form 2	Year 4
Lower Third	Year 5
Middle Third	Year 6
Upper Third	Year 7
Fourth Form	Year 8

## **2. SUMMARY**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

2.1 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

### **(ii) Recommendation for further improvement**

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Formalise the recording of self-review of boarding provision against the National Minimum Standards.

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

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in May 2012. No recommendations were made in relation to boarding welfare provision.

### **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 provided with a suitable and effective induction programme. Each new boarder is offered a taster night and is allocated a 'buddy' on entry. Families are provided with informative booklets, pictures and a video made by the girls illustrating the life of a boarder. Boarders feel confident to turn to a number of staff for personal guidance and contact details for independent listeners and helplines are prominently on display. An overwhelming majority of pupils in the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that they knew what to do if they were worried. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Comprehensive and relevant policies give clear guidance to promote the health and well-being of boarders. Sick boarders are accommodated in appropriate facilities, separate from the other pupils. Well-qualified nursing and boarding staff supervise all medical matters, including first aid, the care of those with chronic conditions and the use of homely remedies. Other medical services, such as dentistry or opticians are arranged as necessary. All staff have regard to the procedures for storage and administration of medicines and detailed documentation is kept electronically. After suitable assessment and a written care plan, boarders may be allowed to self-medicate. This is reviewed regularly with the school's doctor. Confidentiality is respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are provided with a school phone in which they insert their own personal information card and they have daily access to computers for sending emails. The school operates appropriate systems to monitor and control safe practice in the use of electronic communications. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Suitable staff accommodation is located in each boarding house. Comfortable accommodation, solely provided for boarders, includes well lit dormitories, quiet facilities for study, spacious common rooms and a kitchen. Sufficient numbers of well-maintained and clean bath, shower rooms and lavatories offer the appropriate privacy. All dormitories are tidy and inviting, offering individual storage space and opportunity for boarders to personalise their immediate area. Regular risk assessments are undertaken for all boarding areas and prompt attention to any deficiencies ensure boarders are kept safe. Use of surveillance cameras is not intrusive on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 All boarders, including those with particular dietary requirements, are provided with choices at mealtimes that are nutritionally balanced and are prepared, served and eaten in hygienic conditions. Mealtimes in the bright and airy dining room are calm, sociable and orderly. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of pupils commented negatively on the quality of food and the availability of snacks. During the inspection the inspectors sampled the meals, scrutinised the menus and read the extremely positive entries in the daily food comments book and found no evidence to support these views. Boarders have the use of the kitchen in their house to prepare snacks in the evenings and can access drinking water. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Suitable arrangements are made for boarders' laundry and its storage. Boarders are responsible for organising their own bedding and clothing at designated times. Pupils can readily obtain any necessary personal or stationery items on request. Each boarder has their own tuck cupboard which is lockable. Valuable possessions



are deposited with house staff, signed in, and kept secure. Any search of personal belongings is carried out in accordance with current requirements. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 Boarders are able to choose from a wide range of appropriate activities each evening ranging from cookery to Chinese Mandarin. Should a pupil wish to be on their own, quiet areas are available both inside and outdoors. Boarders may learn about the outside world and current events through the provision of an array of daily newspapers and magazines. Weekly events such as thought provoking film nights alert pupils to moral issues in the world beyond school. [NMS 10]

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

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section
- 3.10 The school places importance on ensuring that all measures are undertaken for the health and safety of the pupils. Detailed risk assessments are carried out for all areas of the buildings and grounds and for the educational visits off site. The written health and safety policy is reviewed annually and regular checks of equipment cover all aspects of safety. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that they felt that boarding environment keeps their child safe. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and fire safety is comprehensive. Regular fire drills, both in the day and during boarding time, ensure that boarders are aware of procedures in a variety of situations. Records are kept of fire drills and maintenance of fire equipment and suitable action is taken to remedy any problems. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The policies for safeguarding and child protection are known to staff at all levels and are implemented consistently. Regular training for all staff is provided and appropriate records are kept. Those with particular responsibilities maintain close links with the local safeguarding board. The school governors review and ratify the child protection policy on an annual basis. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Good behaviour is promoted through the support and guidance that boarders receive from boarding staff. Clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies outline the expectations of boarders. Boarders are aware of the school rules and in discussions they spoke highly about the friendly environment of the boarding community. A separate system of behaviour management operates within the boarding environment from that of the day school, and particular consideration is given to providing positive rewards. Misdemeanours lead to a loss of privileges. As required, the school has policies in place for when restraint can be used and appropriate arrangements for searching pupils. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school operates safe recruitment procedures and the single central register is kept as required. Appropriate checks and suitable written agreements are in place for all resident family members. Visitors to the school do not have unsupervised access to the boarders. The school does not appoint guardians. [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 The school has a detailed statement of the principles and practice of boarding, which is provided on the website for parents and in the boarding houses for the pupils. All parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the leadership of boarding. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Governors are conscious of and responsive to the needs of boarding, and they ensure that leadership and management are effective in actively promoting the well-being of the boarders. A boarding governor has recently been appointed to assist the school with monitoring the delivery of the boarding and welfare provision. Clear leadership and management of boarding enable close links to be established between academic and boarding staff. Weekly meetings of those involved in boarding ensure information is shared across the three houses, and day to day concerns are immediately forwarded to the appropriate teacher. The leadership and management, with other senior boarding staff, have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They ensure that the required boarding records are maintained and monitored with action taken as appropriate. Self-evaluation of boarding practice is ongoing, but recording systems for self-review against the National Minimum Standards currently lack formality. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All staff working with boarders have clear job descriptions, access to appraisal and opportunities for professional development. Induction training for all new boarding staff includes safeguarding. Supervision ratios are appropriate and duty staff are suitably experienced. At all times, boarders know who is responsible for them and regular roll calls and record keeping ensure staff know the whereabouts of boarders in their care. The school has an appropriate policy for missing pupils. Several members of boarding staff are resident in the house overnight and boarders know how to contact the member of staff on duty. Suitable adult accommodation is separate from that of the boarders, and pupils do not visit staff accommodation unless in groups for a specific reason. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination. Care is taken to cater for the needs of every individual, including those with SEND and with EAL. Cultural and religious differences are used to extend the boarders' awareness of and respect for global diversity. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In the pre-inspection questionnaires and in discussions, an overwhelming majority of boarders expressed their enthusiasm and enjoyment of boarding. Boarders' views are gathered through the school and boarders' councils, the food comments book and a worry box. Boarders feel that they are listened to and that their suggestions are acted upon. For example their request for having soup at supper was swiftly implemented and greatly appreciated by all. No boarder is penalised for raising a concern. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 A complaints policy is available for all parents. Records show that formal complaints are handled in line with the school's published procedures. Any concerns regarding boarding are invariably dealt with at the informal stage by house staff. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The prefect system is organised so that all the senior houses have an overall head of house supported by a deputy and the junior house has nominated monitors. In addition there are many opportunities for other members of the boarding community to be given specific responsibilities. The younger boarders reported in interviews

that they are very grateful for the help and kindness they receive from the older girls.  
[NMS 19]

3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]