



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

KING'S SCHOOL, ROCHESTER

BOARDING WELFARE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

King's School, Rochester

Full Name of School	King's School, Rochester		
DfE Number	887/6000		
Registered Charity Number	1084266		
Address	King's School, Rochester Satis House Boley Hill Rochester Kent ME1 1TE		
Telephone Number	01634 888555		
Fax Number	01634 888505		
Email Address	info@kings-rochester.co.uk		
Principal	Mr Jeremy Walker		
Chair of Governors	Mr Ronald Hoile		
Age Range	3 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	638		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (396 boys; 242 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	62	5-8: 114
	8-13:	199	13-18: 263
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	590	
Number of Boarders	Total:	48	
	Full:	48	Weekly: 0
Inspection Dates	02 to 04 Feb 2016		

PREFACE

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.

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 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 deputy 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 Deborah Forbes	Reporting Inspector
Mr Carl Bingham	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head Pastoral, Society of Heads school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King's School, Rochester, is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged 3 to 18. It aims to challenge and support all pupils to make the most of their academic and personal potential. It further aims to enable pupils to achieve excellent academic results through a love of learning and to develop skills and interests through activities beyond the classroom. It also seeks to be a nurturing community that develops values within the setting of Christianity. The school is a charitable trust and it is overseen by a governing body, some members of which are ex-officio members from Rochester Cathedral Chapter. The principal of the school is also head of the senior school and delegates responsibility to the heads of the pre-preparatory and preparatory schools, for pupils aged 3 to 8 and 8 to 13 respectively.
- 1.2 Occupying land and buildings in the vicinity of the cathedral, the school traces its foundation to 604 AD and the establishment of a monastery. Henry VIII re-founded the school as The King's School, Rochester in 1541 on the dissolution of the monasteries. It is a cathedral school and the boy choristers are educated in the preparatory school. Some buildings are new and purpose built, but most are Victorian. There are two boarding houses: School House for boys and St Margaret's for girls.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has acquired a new sports centre and most buildings in the senior school have been refurbished, including the boarding houses. There is a new drama studio and theatre studio.
- 1.4 There are currently 638 pupils on the school roll, of whom 396 are boys and 242 are girls. In the senior school, there are 263 pupils, of whom 43 are boarders. Along with the senior boarders, an additional five boarders from the preparatory school are accommodated in the boarding houses. In the preparatory school there are 199 pupils and there are 176 in the pre-preparatory school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most of the day pupils come from North Kent and are of British ethnicity, reflecting the local area, and are from a wide variety of backgrounds. The majority of the boarders are from overseas, from a number of countries including China, Nigeria and South Korea, and some in Western Europe. The school has identified 63 pupils in the senior school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities; 28 of them receive specialist learning support for mild dyslexia and difficulties with literacy. In total, 37 pupils in the senior school speak English as an additional language and 14 receive support from the school for their English. There are two pupils with an education, health and care plan.

- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school up to Year 3 and throughout this report to refer to year groups. The year group nomenclature used by the school from Year 4 and its NC equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Preparatory School

School	NC name
Lower One	Year 4
First Form	Year 5
Second Form	Year 6
Third Form	Year 7
Fourth Form	Year 8

Senior School

School	NC name
Remove	Year 9
Lower Fifth	Year 10
Upper Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. SUMMARY

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.1 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and therefore it must take the following action.
- Ensure that, for any member of staff who undertakes teaching work, a check is made as to whether they are subject to an order prohibiting them from teaching, and that for staff appointed to management positions a check is made as to whether they are prohibited from management of independent schools [National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults, and for the same reason, National Minimum Standard 11, under Child protection].
 - Ensure that the school's governing body monitors the effectiveness with which the leadership and management carry out the required checks on all staff in order to fulfil the responsibilities so that the standards are met [National Minimum Standards 13.1 and 13.4, under Management and development of boarding].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Establish a stronger programme of continual professional development for boarding staff.
 2. Develop a formal system of gathering boarders' views.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

- 2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in March 2013. The school was advised to strengthen monitoring systems within boarding. It has made progress in strengthening its systems.

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 Boarders speak positively about the school's induction programme, which supports their integration into the boarding houses and school. They identify several members of staff to whom they would willingly go for help or advice in dealing with any personal difficulty. Contact details for further sources of support, including an independent listener and additional external helplines, are displayed in houses. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has effective policies, subject to regular review, to promote the physical and mental health and the emotional well-being of boarders. Within each boarding house a room, with an adjacent bathroom, is reserved for boarders who are unwell. The suitably equipped health centre, staffed by qualified nurses, makes separate provision for both male and female boarders to stay overnight if necessary. The school doctor holds a weekly surgery, and appointments are made with other medical and specialist services as required. Medication is appropriately stored and administered, and boarders deemed competent to self-medicate may do so. There are efficient systems in place to ensure that information between the health centre and houses is shared appropriately. Boarders' rights and confidentiality are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders may contact their parents by telephone, email or internet means. Appropriate systems are in place to ensure safe use of the internet. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Both houses provide suitable sleeping accommodation, with any potential risk identified and acted upon. Social areas, including kitchens, are spacious, providing a suitable environment for boarders to relax. Washing and toilet facilities are private, clean and suitable in number. Houses are well maintained, and suitably furnished, heated and ventilated. Bedding is clean and warm. Many boarders personalise their rooms, creating a homely atmosphere. Boarding accommodation is protected from access by unauthorised persons, including members of the public using the school's facilities, and security measures do not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 In their responses to pre-inspection questionnaire, a large majority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the food at mealtimes. In addition a small minority commented on the lack of availability of snacks. In discussions, however, boarders gave mixed opinions about the food. From the menus seen and meals sampled, inspectors found that the food is nutritious and appropriate in choice and quantity. Specific dietary or religious needs are met. All kitchens, including those in houses, are clean. Drinking water is readily available and boarders may prepare snacks at reasonable times. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Boarders comment positively on the speed and efficiency of the school's laundry. They have access to the local shops, where they can easily obtain personal items. All boarders have lockable storage spaces for valuable items but other valuables, including passports, are stored by the house. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of boarders said that they are not happy with the balance of free time and activities, although in

discussions boarders spoke appreciatively of the opportunities available and inspectors found that free time is allowed. Appropriate activities are provided for younger boarders. Suitable risk assessments are in place for activities and reviewed as necessary. Houses and the school have extensive grounds that provide safe areas for recreation or for boarders to be alone. Daily newspapers, internet access and televisions provide boarders with information about the wider world, further enhanced by appropriate access to local facilities. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school does not meet two of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 A suitable health and safety policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of those concerned with its implementation. A health and safety committee meets regularly to review the safety of the site. The premises, accommodation and facilities are regularly inspected and the school has systems for ensuring that necessary repairs are carried out and hazards eradicated as soon as possible. The challenges presented by old buildings and a site crossed by several public roads and rights of way are managed so that the welfare of all pupils, including boarders, is safeguarded. A risk assessment policy has been drawn up and risk assessments are in place for buildings and activities. Identified risks are reduced appropriately. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 External contractors carry out fire risk assessments and review them annually, as well as maintaining fire-fighting systems and equipment. Staff are trained for their roles in fire safety but recording of training is not thorough or systematic. The school keeps centrally records of all fire drills carried out, including those undertaken each term in boarding time. Boarders confirmed that they are familiar with fire evacuation procedures. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school has formed helpful links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and refers promptly to children's social care or the Local Authority Designated Officer if it is necessary or to seek advice. Staff are trained in safeguarding, in accordance with the requirements of the LSCB. An appropriate policy is on the website. However, the school has not followed official guidance, because it did not carry out pre-employment vetting checks against the prohibition from teaching orders for teachers appointed since April 2012, or prohibition from management checks for those in management positions from August 2015. By the conclusion of the inspection the required checks had been retrospectively carried out. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school's behaviour policy encourages good behaviour. Rewards and sanctions for boarders are consistent with the school policy and minor sanctions within boarding are recorded only in the house. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of boarders said that boarding staff do not treat them fairly. Inspectors' scrutiny of house sanction logs and discussions with boarders indicated that sanctions are awarded sparingly and consistently. Boarders reported that bullying is rare and they know what to do if it should occur. A very large majority said in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that boarders get on well together in the house. The school has procedures in place for the application of restraint and for searching pupils and their possessions but has not recently had cause to use them. [NMS 12]

- 3.14 The school does not meet the standard for NMS 14.1 because of the omission of the vetting check referred to under NMS 11. Disclosure and Barring Service checks are obtained for all persons living on the same premises as boarders but not employed by the school, and written agreements with them are in place, setting out their responsibilities with regard to visitors and to their own conduct. Visitors to boarding accommodation are supervised by staff and do not gain access to boarders or their accommodation. An overwhelming majority of boarders said in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they feel safe in their boarding houses. The school does not arrange guardians for boarders. [NMS 14]

3.(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision

- 3.15 The school does not meet two of the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 A clear statement of boarding principles and practice is displayed on house notice boards, is well known to staff and is provided to parents. The boarders clearly understand them. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 A nominated governor visits the boarding houses each term, meets with the boarders and reports back to the governing body on any issue that affects the houses. Governance is supportive of the boarding provision but has not fully monitored the effectiveness of recruitment procedures. There is clear leadership of the practice of boarding in the school although development is not systematically planned. Links between academic and residential staff are facilitated by the fact that housemistresses and boarding tutors are members of the academic staff and communication is frequent. The school's leadership and management actively promote the well-being of pupils and demonstrate skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles; however, they have not consistently fulfilled their responsibilities with regard to recruitment checks. Senior boarding staff have an adequate level of experience and training. Policies, documents and records are maintained and monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for boarders as appropriate, as recommended at the previous inspection. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Staff working within boarding have job descriptions setting out their duties, and receive induction training in boarding, in addition to the school's induction programme for new members of staff. Reviews of their boarding practice are included in the whole-school appraisal system. Some training opportunities are taken and staff may request to attend courses. Continual professional development in boarding is not yet fully embedded. The staff who supervise boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number and experience. Boarders are always under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who knows how to contact them at all times. Staff actively search for boarders whom they cannot immediately locate and have not had to put the missing child policy into action. Members of the academic staff often help with supervision of weekend activities. There is always at least one member of staff sleeping in boarding houses whom boarders can contact easily if they need to. All staff accommodation is suitably separated from the boarders. It is rare for boarders to enter staff accommodation but, if they do so, they are properly supervised. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders are appreciative of the international nature of their community and report that they do not experience discrimination for any reason. Boarders from overseas and those with SEND all confirmed that they are comfortable within the tolerant environment established. [NMS 16]

- 3.20 Boarders can make their views known to house staff at any time and reported in discussion that they feel able to do so. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority said that the school does not listen or respond to their opinions. Inspectors judged that boarders are listened to but the boarding houses have not yet established a way of consistently and formally seeking boarders' collective views. [NMS17]
- 3.21 The school has an appropriate policy for recording and responding to complaints and identifies any relating to boarding. However, boarding house staff respond readily to parents' concerns and aim to resolve them at any early stage. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 There are boarder heads of house within boarding who are also prefects in the school. Within boarding their role is organisational and pastoral. They regard it as one of their responsibilities to help younger boarders who may seek someone in whom to confide. They are trained for their roles and do not award sanctions. [NMS19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]