



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**MAIDWELL HALL SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Maidwell Hall School

Full Name of School	<b>Maidwell Hall School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>928/6005</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>309917</b>		
Address	<b>Maidwell Hall School Maidwell Northampton Northamptonshire NN6 9JG</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01604 686234</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01604 686659</b>		
Email Address	<b>thesecretary@maidwellhall.co.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Robert Lankester</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Richard Cunningham</b>		
Age Range	<b>7 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>112</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (91 boys; 21 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	7-11:	<b>50</b>	11-13: <b>62</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>4</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>108</b>	
	Full:	<b>104</b>	Weekly: <b>4</b>
Inspection dates	<b>12 Nov 2013 to 14 Nov 2013</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 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) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. From September 2011 the inspection of boarding welfare forms part of the inspection process. 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. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in November 2009 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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 the boarding accommodation 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 Jan Preece

Mr Michael Hewett

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding  
(Former Head, ISA school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Maidwell Hall School is a boarding school for boys and girls aged between seven and thirteen years. It is situated in 50 acres of grounds, with additional large areas of farmland, on the edge of the village of Maidwell in Northamptonshire. Accommodation is centred around a Grade II listed country house, which dates from 1637 and was altered substantially in the nineteenth century. The school moved to the current site in 1933 and since then various buildings, including a dining hall, indoor swimming pool, sports hall and new classroom and dormitory accommodation, have been added. Since the previous inspection, the school has admitted girls and is now fully co-educational. The school is a registered charity and is administered by a board of trustees, the members of which act as its governors.
- 1.2 The school aims to encourage all pupils to discover their talents, to develop these to the full and to become interested in a wide range of different hobbies and activities. It also seeks to encourage the development of spiritual and moral values, underpinned by its Christian foundation. Boarding specifically aims to foster the development of self-awareness, tolerance and independence, while ensuring that the happiness of all boarders is paramount.
- 1.3 At the time of inspection there were 112 pupils on the school roll, of whom 91 were boys and 21 were girls. Of these, 104 were full and 4 were weekly boarders. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 are able to board on a weekly basis for their first year and may also board for two or three specified nights as transitional boarders. Boarding is overseen by the director of boarding who is supported by a team of resident and non-resident staff. Boarders are accommodated on the first and second floor of the main house. They are mainly of white British origin and come from many areas of the United Kingdom. A small number are from overseas.
- 1.4 The school has identified 19 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive extra help. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. All of the 12 pupils for whom English is an additional language receive additional support. When pupils leave at the age of 13, most transfer to independent boarding schools.
- 1.5 National Curriculum 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 (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Form I	Year 8
Form II	Year 7
Form III	Year 6
Form IV	Year 5
Form V	Year 4

## **2. SUMMARY**

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

- 2.1 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

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

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that all staff with boarding responsibilities receive formal reviews of their practice linked to opportunities for further professional training.

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

- 2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection, undertaken by Ofsted in November 2009, made three recommendations. These related to improvements to records of medication and to flooring and furnishings in the boarding accommodation. These have all been addressed.

### **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 allocated a guide and appreciate the support given by experienced boarders. They say that they have a choice of sympathetic staff to approach should they experience any difficulties. Boarders are aware of the independent listener, whose contact details are displayed by boarders' telephones, together with other helpline numbers. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Medical arrangements are supervised efficiently by a team of resident and non-resident matrons, and appropriate numbers of other staff have first-aid training. The matrons provide first-aid treatment, and those who are appropriately trained administer homely remedies and prescribed medicines from a secure dispensary. Records of treatment and medication are kept meticulously and boarders with ongoing health conditions are well supported in their treatment regimes. All boarders are registered with the school doctor, who visits each week, and ancillary medical care is organised when necessary. The sick bay has separate rooms for boys and girls, and parents are kept informed of their children's condition. Boarders' rights to confidentiality are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders say that they may contact their families easily. They have two telephones which are suitably private and many use email through the school's secure network. During the weekly tutor period they write a letter home and they say that they look forward to receiving post. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Accommodation for boys and girls is on separate floors and is clean and well maintained. Bathroom facilities are suitably private. The boys' dormitories are mid-way through a refurbishment programme and the girls' accommodation was renovated when the school became co-educational. The dormitories are well lit, heated and ventilated, particularly those recently refurbished. Most boarders use their own bedding and all report that beds are comfortable. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their dormitories and many, particularly the girls, do so eagerly. There are suitable areas to complete prep and undertake private study. Boarding accommodation is protected from access by unauthorised people. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Boarders' meals are nutritious and afford choice and variety. Special dietary requirements are accommodated. Meals are prepared in hygienic surroundings and menus are carefully planned to provide a balanced diet, often using locally sourced ingredients. Boarders thoroughly enjoy all the food provided. They have ready access to drinks and are provided with suitable snacks. A food committee meets regularly and its views are listened to and, where appropriate, acted upon. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry arrangements ensure that clothing and bedding are returned speedily and efficiently. Boarders may obtain necessary personal items and stationery from the matrons and the office. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses a few boarders expressed concerns about the safety of their belongings. Inspectors found that personal items may be stored in lockable tuck boxes, and during interviews boarders expressed satisfaction with arrangements. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders appreciate the extensive range of activities offered at morning break, during the evenings and at weekends. There is a suitable balance of supervised



activities and free time, and the availability of all the school's facilities enables them to develop their sporting, creative or linguistic skills and interests. There are frequent trips after church on Sundays. Boarders say that they have many safe areas to be alone. Prefects may watch the evening news and all boarders have access to library newspapers. Boarders have safeguarded access to the internet and are alerted to major world events as a community. [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's arrangements and procedures for health and safety reflect the careful attention paid to protecting boarders. Comprehensive risk assessments for the site and boarders' activities promote safety. Maintenance arrangements are comprehensive and appropriately recorded. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Suitable measures to prevent fire are in place and equipment is tested and maintained regularly. Many staff are trained as fire marshals. Fire drills, including those in boarding time, are regular and correctly recorded. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The arrangements to promote welfare and safeguarding follow current requirements. Appropriate training ensures that staff know what to do should there be a concern. Pastoral matters are communicated efficiently and boarders say that they feel safe and well cared for. A named governor undertakes responsibility for safeguarding and participates in an annual child protection audit that informs the governors' annual safeguarding review. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Good behaviour is promoted through suitable policies, as well as through positive relationships between boarders and staff and amongst the boarders. A small minority of responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that sanctions are not always fair, but boarders spoken to by inspectors did not support this view. Boarders appreciate the use of homely sanctions in boarding time, such as an early bedtime for talking after 'lights out'. They speak warmly of incentives for positive behaviour such as the Tidiest Dorm competition. They report confidently that bullying is rare and immediately addressed should it occur. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Staff recruitment meets requirements and checks are recorded correctly. An appropriate written agreement informs family members over the age of 16 of residential staff of their responsibilities, and a suitable visitors' policy ensures that there is no unsupervised access to boarders. The school does not appoint guardians, but it monitors any guardianship arrangements through boarders' and parents' feedback. [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 Boarding is integral to the school's ethos, and its aims are provided to parents. Boarders are made aware of these values frequently, as at daily prayers, and boarding practice reflects the school's ethos. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Boarding is led by experienced and committed resident staff, including the leadership, assisted by non-resident staff who organise activities or assist in the boarding house. Frequent and efficient communication ensures that all staff are made aware of matters relating to boarders' welfare and progress. All the requisite boarding records are correctly maintained. [NMS 13]

- 3.18 Staff with boarding duties have clear job descriptions and receive comprehensive induction training. Appraisal includes boarding roles, although few staff have undertaken relevant external training recently. Appraisal for matrons is informal and currently unrecorded. Duty rotas ensure that boarders are appropriately supervised and boarders are confident that they can always find an adult quickly. Formal and informal roll calls ensure that staff know boarders' whereabouts and a suitable policy informs staff of procedures should a boarder go missing. There are always two staff sleeping in the boarding house and boarders confirm that they are easily contactable during the night. Boarders do not have inappropriate access to resident staff's accommodation. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 In discussions and in their responses to the questionnaire, boarders reported that they are treated equally and do not experience any discrimination. The well-being of pupils with SEND is carefully monitored by staff. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of boarders said that they have insufficient opportunities to contribute their views. However, in interviews boarders said that the food committee and school council are effective and that they are confident to share their views with staff informally. Dormitory captains and prefects also make suggestions in their weekly meetings. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school has a suitable complaints procedure on its website. Records of complaints indicate that the few made in recent years have all been resolved informally. The boarders' complaints record shows that any concerns have been addressed appropriately. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Responsibilities in the boarding house are shared between prefects and dormitory captains. Prefects may record good as well as negative behaviour in a prefects' book, which is discussed with a senior member of staff. Dormitory captains help staff to ensure the smooth running of their dormitory. Both groups act as good role models and are supported through weekly meetings with a senior member of staff. Younger boarders consider that the prefects and dormitory captains exercise their roles in a friendly and supportive manner. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]