



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

QUEEN MARGARET'S SCHOOL

BOARDING WELFARE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Queen Margaret's School

Full Name of School	Queen Margaret's School		
DfE Number	815/6035		
Registered Charity Number	517523		
Address	Queen Margaret's School Escrick Park York North Yorkshire YO19 6EU		
Telephone Number	01904 728261		
Fax Number	01904 728150		
Email Address	enquiries@queenmargaretsschool.co.uk		
Head	Dr Paul Silverwood		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Emma Carnegie-Brown		
Age Range	11 to 19		
Total Number of Pupils	352		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	11-18:	352	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	62	
Number of Boarders	Total:	290	
	Full:	259	Weekly: 31
Inspection dates	09 Oct 2012 to 11 Oct 2012		

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. 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 2008 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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 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

Mr Martin Bussey

Mrs Sarah Gomm

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, HMC school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 SUMMARY	3
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendation for further improvement	3
(iii) Progress since the previous inspection	3
3 COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS	4
(a) Boarding provision and care	4
(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding	5
(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision	6

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Queen Margaret's is an independent boarding and day school for girls aged from 11 to 18, located in 75 acres of parkland, six miles south of the city of York. Established in 1901, the school retains the Anglican traditions of its founders. It is overseen by a governing body which administers the charitable company that owns the school. The head, and the deputy head who oversees boarding, are new in post since the previous boarding inspection.
- 1.2 The school aims to offer an exciting, challenging and balanced experience to girls within a community of people who care for each other and grow as individuals. It seeks to enable pupils to achieve excellence inside and outside the classroom; to develop an enthusiasm for independent thought, learning and research; to grow with emotional maturity, social awareness and respect for individuality and difference; to forge special friendships that will stay with them for the rest of their lives; to be interesting, well-informed, happy and confident members of the community. Within boarding the school seeks to provide a relaxed, happy and caring environment which the boarders may call 'home'.
- 1.3 There are 352 girls who attend the school, of whom 259 are full and 31 are weekly boarders. All day girls experience boarding at least once a week and have a bed kept for them in one of seven boarding houses, each of which corresponds to a particular year group. Some boarding houses are within the main school buildings while others, including a set of cottages which house Year 13, are set in the surrounding parkland. In addition all girls are members of school houses which include members drawn from all year groups. Girls come from a wide cross section of backgrounds. Approximately half come from the north of England and others from across England and Scotland. A fifth of boarders are from overseas, drawn from thirteen countries; the largest group, 35 girls, come from China.
- 1.4 The school has identified 63 girls who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). None has a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 53 girls, all of whom receive support.
- 1.5 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.

School	NC name
Year 1	Year 7
Year 2	Year 8
Year 3	Year 9
Year 4	Year 10
Year 5	Year 11
Lower 6th	Year 12
Upper 6th	Year 13

2. SUMMARY

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.1 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, and therefore it must:
- ensure that all staff who are employed under supervision before Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks have been received are checked against the ISA barring list before commencing work [National Minimum Standard 11, under Child Protection and 14.1, under Staff Recruitment and Checks on Other Adults].

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that systems of rewards, and sanctions for less serious misdemeanours, are applied with greater consistency and clarity by all staff.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

- 2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in November 2008. The recommendations to improve the awareness of catering staff with regard to child protection and of all staff regarding recruitment policy, to ensure that boarders are aware of options at supper and that heating and ventilation in the houses are improved, and to review maintenance access to boarding houses, have been met.

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 An appropriate process of induction and guidance exists for new boarders. Clear handbooks and documents help them before they arrive and arrangements such as a 'guardian angel' scheme assist them in their first weeks in their boarding houses. Boarders are happy to ask house staff for guidance and an independent listener is available. Help-lines and details of staff with specific support roles, including a counsellor for international boarders, are displayed in each boarding house. (NMS 2)
- 3.3 The school's system for medical care ensures confidential support through a medical centre staffed by registered school nurses at all times. Suitably trained and qualified first aiders in the boarding houses provide additional support and there are regular surgeries. Boarders have access to dentistry and other specialist health services when required. Prescribed medicines are held in locked facilities by house staff and administration is suitably recorded. Those boarders assessed as being sufficiently responsible to administer their own medicines may do so and are confident in the arrangements. (NMS 3)
- 3.4 Boarders can contact their families in a variety of ways. Many use mobile phones, with access for younger pupils suitably monitored, and others use the access to the internet provided by the school. Some boarders, in response to pre-inspection questionnaires, noted that access to a wireless signal was inconsistent between boarding houses. The school is aware of this and is currently upgrading wireless access throughout the site. (NMS 4)
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation is clean, comfortable and welcoming overall, with appropriate ventilation and heating. Some areas reflect recent redecoration while others, including Cloisters for Year 12, await planned refurbishment. All provide appropriate privacy. Arrangements ensure that those who board only for one night a week have their own bed and personal space which, in common with full boarders, they may personalise. Access to washroom facilities, showers and baths is provided in sufficient numbers for the maximum number of boarders in each house at any one time. Study facilities are provided. Access to the boarding houses is controlled appropriately and surveillance equipment is used sensitively. (NMS 5)
- 3.6 Boarders eat in a communal dining hall. Food is of sufficient quantity and provides choice and variety. Specialist dietary requirements are catered for and boarders know that they can ask for alternatives. In their questionnaire responses a minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the food provided. Inspection evidence did not support this view. In interviews and at mealtimes the boarders' responses were positive, noting the success of recent changes to the school's catering arrangements. There is access to kitchen areas to prepare food and drinks outside meal times. The communal café area attached to the houses for Years 8 to 10 is popular with these boarders. (NMS 8)
- 3.7 Clothes are laundered in each boarding house; by staff up to Year 11 and by boarders in the sixth form houses. Suitable provision is made for boarders to purchase everyday items in school or, for older boarders, in the nearby village. Boarders may lock away valuable possessions in their own cupboards or entrust them to staff. (NMS9)

- 3.8 Pupils have access to a range of activities throughout the day and evening and at weekends. Many of these enable boarders of different ages to mix socially, including preparations for competitions between school houses. Quiet areas are provided and boarders have access to newspapers and other media to maintain an interest in the outside world. (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 All necessary measures are in place to ensure boarders' health and safety. The school's clear health and safety policy and procedures are reviewed regularly. Risk assessments for activities on and off the school site show awareness of potential hazards and boarders' welfare is safeguarded on residential trips. (NMS 6)
- 3.11 Fire risk assessments exist for all areas and these are reviewed regularly. Fire drills both in and out of regular school hours are recorded appropriately, together with appliance and alarm checks. (NMS 7)
- 3.12 The school's detailed child protection policy and procedures are made known to all staff, including non-teaching and catering staff. A named designated person is suitably trained and oversees appropriate training for all other staff. The school's procedures, including an annual review of child protection measures by governors, are mostly followed effectively. Recruitment checks on a few staff have not followed official guidance fully and consistently, although steps taken to supervise these staff on beginning work have ensured that no child has been put at risk. The school has an effective relationship with the local children's safeguarding board. (NMS 11)
- 3.13 The school's detailed policies to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying are in line with its aim to support the individual. Boarders report that they rarely encounter any bullying and express confidence that if it does occur it is dealt with quickly. There is a culture of individual responsibility and respect for others. Serious sanctions are rare, commensurate with the school's published measures, suitably recorded and considered to be fair by boarders. In their responses to questionnaires a small minority of boarders noted less consistency and clarity in the operation of sanctions to deal with small-scale misdemeanours, and in giving rewards. Inspection evidence supports this view, particularly where small shortcomings may result in order marks or not, depending on the practice of individual staff. Arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions are appropriate and employed with sensitivity when necessary, which is rarely. (NMS 12)
- 3.14 The school's system, of which staff are aware, to recruit governors, staff and volunteers is diligent in obtaining CRB checks at the enhanced level and recording these and other checks appropriately. However, arrangements for checking some staff who begin work under supervision before a CRB is obtained have not included a check against the ISA barred list before employment commences. Visitors to boarding areas, including maintenance staff, are carefully supervised. All residents over sixteen who reside in boarding, but are not employed by the school, have a CRB check and appropriate written agreements with the school. The appointment of guardians is the responsibility of parents but the school maintains an awareness of how these arrangements affect the boarders' well-being. (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 A statement of the school's boarding principles is posted on its website and is outlined in useful documents for boarders, parents and staff. (NMS 1)
- 3.17 Management of boarding is ensured by structures through which pastoral oversight complements the academic. Appropriate job descriptions exist at all levels of management. Roles and responsibilities are understood and executed. Consistency of care is supported by weekly one-to-one meetings with tutors. Boarding staff have the required levels of experience to fulfil their roles. Monitoring of procedures boarding policies is effective. Development planning includes a focus on the future needs of the boarding community, including in the areas of health and safety. (NMS 13)
- 3.18 The boarders' supervision is planned so that two members of staff are on duty in each house at any one time. Night care is provided and boarders know where to obtain help. Arrangements for boarders to sign in and out of houses ensure that their whereabouts is known, including those who may board for only one or two nights a week. Induction procedures support new staff. The school's recently revised system for appraisal provides review, leading to opportunities for professional development. Staff undertake training in a variety of areas linked to boarding. (NMS 15)
- 3.19 The broad cultural mix within boarding is reflected in sensitivity to the needs and customs of those of different nationalities. The school's focus on the individual ensures an awareness of each boarder's distinctive needs, including those with SEND. (NMS 16)
- 3.20 Boarders express their views through the school council and discussion with individual staff. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority felt that the school does not ask for or respond to their views. However, proceedings of the school council show clear consideration of a variety of issues with minuted actions covering food, access to internet sites, and social facilities. (NMS 17)
- 3.21 The school has a suitable complaints policy for parents but this is rarely invoked in its full form. Concerns are dealt with promptly and in detail. The responses of parents to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. (NMS 18)
- 3.22 House captains and others with responsibilities have job descriptions and receive appropriate training and monitoring to fulfil their roles. (NMS 19)
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for any of its boarders. (NMS 20 not applicable)