



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**BEDE'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE**

**INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Bede's Preparatory School

The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>Bede's Preparatory School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>845/6011</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>278950</b>		
Address	<b>Bede's Preparatory School Duke's Drive Eastbourne East Sussex BN20 7XL</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01323 734222</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01323 745438</b>		
Email Address	<b>prep.headmaster@bedes.org</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Giles Entwisle</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Major General Tony Meier</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 13 years</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>391</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (244 boys; 147 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>48</b>	5-11: <b>163</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>57</b>	11-18: <b>123</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>352</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>39</b>	
	Full:	<b>16</b>	Weekly: <b>23</b>
Inspection dates	<b>28 April 2015 to 30 April 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 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 the boarding house 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 Sue Bennett

Mr Lawrence Groves

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Headmaster, ISA school)

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Bede's Preparatory School is a co-educational day and boarding school, for boys and girls from the age of three months to thirteen years. It is located in Eastbourne, on the edge of the South Downs National Park, overlooking the sea. Founded in 1895, the school is part of the St Bede's Educational Trust, which is a registered charity, and includes a senior school, dance school and international summer school. Bede's Preparatory School has its own headmaster; the senior school headmaster is the chief executive. A single board of governors provides wide-ranging expertise and is responsible for all the Trust's establishments.
- 1.2 The St Bede's Educational Trust aims to provide an outstanding education to all its pupils, so that they leave as well-rounded, confident and successful members of the global community. In support, boarding at Bede's Preparatory School aims to provide an environment where pupils are safe and feel safe, alongside nurturing their well-being, self-esteem and resilience through mutual support. Furthermore, the school aims to provide a wealth of educational experiences which equip pupils with skills for the outside world in a meaningful, compassionate and enduring fashion. Since the previous inspection, there has been significant refurbishment within the accommodation and improvements to systems that ensure boarders' welfare. A new boarding handbook has been introduced and communication systems developed further to enable boarders more opportunities to contact their friends and families.
- 1.3 The school has 391 pupils on roll, 244 boys and 147 girls, of whom 105 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Currently 39 pupils board from the age of eight years old, either on a full, weekly or flexi basis. There are 96 pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 86 receive extra support for their learning. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. A further 20 pupils use English as an additional language (EAL), 15 of whom require additional support. Pupils' families predominantly come from business or professional backgrounds. Most are of white British ethnicity and others are from a broad mix of other nationalities and cultures, as reflected in the diversity of the boarding community.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. SUMMARY**

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

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

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

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Strengthen systems that promote positive behaviour within the boarding house.
2. Ensure a consistent approach to recording sanctions in boarding logs.
3. Improve the provision for evening snacks and the quality of meals on weekends.

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

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in December 2009 and boarding welfare was inspected as part of an ISI Integrated inspection in May 2012. Recommendations were made by Ofsted to upgrade the boarders' kitchen facilities and dormitory organisation, and review the procedures for recruitment and complaints for compliance with NMS. These recommendations have been implemented in full.

### **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 Before arrival, new boarders receive a comprehensive handbook and are allocated a buddy, which helps them settle into the boarding life. After a week, they are given a checklist to ensure that they know and understand the systems. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, the overwhelming majority of boarders agree that they have a supportive group of adults to whom they can turn, including outside school. Contact details for external helplines are prominently displayed on house notice boards. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has and implements effective policies for the care of boarders who are unwell, including for their physical, mental and emotional well-being. Individual welfare plans are compiled on every boarder and circulated to all appropriate staff to ensure that the individual needs of each boarder are met. Clear arrangements for first aid, care for boarders with chronic conditions and dealing with medical emergencies are in place. The surgery, overseen by qualified medical staff, is well equipped and the records for all medical care and dispensing of medicines are carefully maintained. Medicines are securely stored and clear procedures for administration are followed. Household remedies are available where deemed appropriate. The school has appropriate isolation arrangements, which include bathroom facilities for boarders who are sick or injured. Boys and girls are separated when necessary. Boarders have access to specialist services, such as the local doctor, dentist and optician. Prescribed medicines are carefully managed and those who self-medicate are assessed as suitably competent to do so. Pupil information is held in confidence and boarders' rights as patients are fully respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders have a wealth of opportunity to contact their families by using their own electronic devices or one of three house computers. They can also access one of three designated wonder phones in the boarding house to use in private should they so wish. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The boarding accommodation comprises one house with beautiful sea views. The house is well organised and managed, appropriately heated, lit and cleaned, and is easily accessible for all boarders. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and any findings promptly acted on. There are separate floors for boys and girls, a cosy communal room and an open-plan kitchen lounge with comfortable furniture for relaxation and socialising. Boarders can either complete homework in school or in the boarding house. All boarders sleep in suitably sized rooms with appropriate furnishing and space for personal belongings and clothes. Clean bedding provides appropriate comfort and warmth. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their rooms with posters, photographs, soft toys and duvet covers. Washroom facilities are appropriate in number, easily accessible from bedrooms, and offer suitable privacy. Boarders also have access to a secure garden area where they can play games or just relax. The boarding house sleeping accommodation is for the sole use of the boarders and is secure from unauthorised access. Safety measures do not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Nutritious food is prepared in a spacious, well-equipped and hygienic kitchen. Meals are balanced and nutritious, and tailored to suit special dietary, medical or religious needs. Staff register boarders' attendance at all meals and oversee what they eat. During discussions boarders stated that some evening snacks and weekend meals



lacked variation and appetising appeal. Inspection evidence supported some of these views. A majority also reinforced this viewpoint through their pre-inspection responses. Boarders have unlimited access to water, milk and fruit. There are no boarders with disabilities that require support with eating. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 The laundering of boarders' bedding and personal clothes is efficient. There is ample storage and items are safely returned to each boarder on the same day. Stationery can be acquired from the school shop and personal toiletries from the matron's room. Boarders can also make purchases during weekend shopping trips. Boarders' personal belongings are safely stored in their lockable tuck boxes; house parents look after valuable items such as electronic equipment, passports and money. Official guidance is observed in the unlikely event of staff needing to search boarders' belongings. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A small minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the balance of activities and free time. Inspection evidence concludes that the balance is appropriate. Evening activities are well planned and risk assessed for safety. Pursuits are varied, ranging from cupcake making and kayaking to dance, music and drama. On weekends, boarders visit local amenities and events. Boarders have access to a variety of communal areas, inside and outside, for relaxation, playing games, quiet reading or time alone. Boarders enjoy the school chapel as a space for quiet reflection. Boarders can access the world news every morning through an assortment of daily newspapers. No onerous demands are placed on boarders. [NMS 10]

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

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 Comprehensive written health and safety policies and procedures, including risk assessment documentation, are implemented effectively. Detailed risk assessments cover the premises, accommodation and facilities. Both the management and the governors' health and safety committee regularly review these arrangements. Risk assessments for off-site and residential trips are effectively completed and monitored. These safeguarding measures ensure boarders' welfare, and a safe environment for them to enjoy. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 All necessary measures to reduce risks from fire have been taken. Regular fire drills are carried out, including during boarding time, and boarders have a clear understanding of emergency evacuation procedures. Records are correctly maintained. Equipment is regularly tested and maintained, including any devices which boarders bring in from home. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school has a stringent focus on safeguarding. The safeguarding policy complies with current regulatory guidance. All staff, including those with designated safeguarding responsibilities, have appropriate levels of training. Regular update training ensures that all staff and governors are fully aware of current regulatory procedures. Governors have undertaken the annual review of safeguarding with due diligence. Additionally, a governors' committee carefully monitors safeguarding arrangements. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school consistently implements their written policies, which comply with current legislation, to promote positive behaviour. These include measures to guard against bullying, including cyber-bullying, and are well understood by both staff and boarders. Boarders have a strong knowledge of school rules. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a minority of boarders comment that rewards and

sanctions are not always fairly administered by staff. Inspection evidence and discussions with boarders confirm that rewards are widely awarded during the school day and that sanctions are fair. In the boarding house, staff use positive reinforcement as rewards to acknowledge good citizenship values, although in balance, sanctions for misdemeanours, whilst fair, are more apparent. Pre-inspection questionnaire responses identify that a few boarders are uncertain about the school's handling of bullying. However, during discussions, boarders were adamant that bullying is rare and they feel confident that staff would address any such occurrences promptly. Incidences of poor behaviour, including disciplinary sanctions and the use of physical restraint are carefully logged and monitored by senior leaders to identify any patterns. However, in the boarding house records lack consistency in logging sanctions. Any concerns about boarders' behaviour are communicated in weekly whole-staff meetings, ensuring the consistency of support for boarders' well-being. Appropriate procedures are in place for searching boarders and their possessions should the need arise. [NMS 12]

- 3.14 The school operates the correct safer recruitment procedures for the appointment of all staff, volunteers and governors, in line with regulatory guidance. The central register of appointments is accurately maintained. There are currently no residents on the premises over the age of 16 who are not employed by the school. Visitors are carefully supervised to ensure that they do not have unsupervised access to boarders or their accommodation. Although the school does not appoint guardians, it provides clear guidance to parents who make their own arrangements, demonstrating the school's commitment to safeguarding boarders' welfare. [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 suitable statement of boarding principles is displayed on house notice boards and in respective handbooks for boarders, parents and staff. These values are reflected in practice through the community environment of the house, within which boarders comment that they feel safe and well cared for. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 A clear structure of boarding leadership and management is in place. Senior leaders meet with house staff each week to discuss the effectiveness of boarding practice and the provision for boarders' welfare and well-being. Additionally, provision and compliance matters are regularly discussed at governance level and, if necessary, appropriate action taken to address any shortcomings. Senior staff demonstrate that they have necessary skills and knowledge for their respective roles. Self-evaluation systems measured against boarding compliance and strategic development planning demonstrate a clear vision for boarding improvement. Effective links between the academic and residential staff, such as weekly staff meetings and daily electronic communications, ensure that boarders' educational and pastoral needs are carefully considered and supported. Senior boarding staff are suitably experienced and have specialist training for work in boarding. Boarding documents are now followed and maintained as required by regulatory guidance, as some minor policy amendments were required pre-inspection to fully reflect recent compliance updates. All records are appropriately maintained, monitored and implemented in practice; prompt action is taken if any discrepancies are identified, to improve outcomes for boarders. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All boarding staff are employed by the school and have detailed job descriptions which closely reflect their roles and responsibilities. Suitable induction procedures are implemented for those newly appointed to boarding roles. All staff receive

regular professional reviews and have opportunities for further training to enhance their professional development. Boarders are appropriately supervised at all times, day and night, by staff who are appropriately qualified and experienced. Notice boards provide boarders with clear guidance on staff support. Boarders understand how to contact staff who sleep in the house at night. Regular registration procedures at key points during boarding time ensure that staff know boarders' whereabouts at all times. There is a detailed policy to follow in the unlikely event that of a missing boarder and staff have a clear understanding about what to do. Suitably separated accommodation is provided for staff. Boarders' access to staff accommodation is properly supervised at all times. [NMS 15]

- 3.19 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority of boarders commented negatively on the fairness of treatment by staff. However, during discussions, boarders say that they are treated equally and fairly, and that no inappropriate discrimination takes place. Additionally, they feel that staff are sensitive to their needs and provide suitable support. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Boarders are encouraged to contribute their views on boarding provision through house discussions and the school council. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority of boarders expressed concerns over the school's attention to their voicing opinions. However, during discussions, boarders say that they feel able to raise concerns and are confident that staff give appropriate consideration to any issues. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school follows appropriate policies and procedures for complaints, in line with regulatory requirements. The vast majority of parents, in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, consider that any concerns receive careful consideration and a prompt response. Records are efficiently maintained, including detail of any action taken by the school. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 House prefects are given appropriate specific duties and responsibilities, such as being positive role models and looking after younger boarders. They receive suitable training and supervision to counter possible abuses of their roles. A minority of boarders, in pre-inspection questionnaire responses, felt that opportunities for further responsibility are limited, although their comments during their discussions with inspectors were positive and they felt that they all have a role to play in promoting the community ethos of the boarding house. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings. [NMS20]