



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

YARLET SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Yarlet School

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

Full Name of School	Yarlet School
DfE Number	860/6000
Registered Charity Number	528618
Address	Yarlet School Yarlet Stafford Staffordshire ST18 9SU
Telephone Number	01785 286568
Fax Number	01785 286568
Email Address	info@yarletschool.org
Head	Mr Ian Raybould
Chair of Governors	Dr Alison Primrose
Age Range	2 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	154
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (88 boys; 66 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 9 5-11: 79 3-5 (EYFS): 35 11-13: 31
Inspection Dates	13 May 2015 to 15 May 2015

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 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 Ruth McFarlane	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Linda Smallwood	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Deputy Head and Head of Boarding, GSA/IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Yarlet School is situated in a rural setting near Stafford. It was founded in 1873 as a preparatory school for boys. It is now a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils from the ages of 2 to 13. The school became a charitable educational trust with a board of governors in 1970. A new chair of the governing body has been appointed since the previous inspection. In addition to the main school Victorian building, further school accommodation has been constructed over the years.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide an environment where pupils are safe and extremely well cared for and nurtured, whilst promoting and recognising exemplary behaviour, and enabling its pupils to achieve to the best of their ability in all areas of school life. It seeks to offer an extensive and high quality extra-curricular programme with particular strengths in sport and music, and to include opportunities for pupils to learn by making contributions in the community.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 154 pupils on roll, 88 boys and 66 girls. Boarding is available on a flexible basis for two nights a week, currently Wednesdays and Thursdays, for pupils from Years 3 to 8. At the time of the inspection thirteen pupils were boarding, six boys and seven girls. Boarding accommodation is in the main school building, with boys' and girls' dormitories on separate floors.
- 1.4 The majority of pupils are of white British origin and very few pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). Most pupils come from professional or business families, and live within easy commuting distance of the school. The school has identified 23 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All receive specialist learning support. One pupil has an education, health and care plan.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used by the school and 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. Ensure that food is presented in an appetising manner and that boarders are encouraged to eat healthy options, including fruit and vegetables.
2. Formalise the regular reviews that take place for non-teaching staff involved in boarding.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI as part of an integrated inspection in May 2012. No recommendations were made in relation to boarding 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 Allocated 'buddies' and a boarding booklet help to induct and guide new boarders. Boarders feel that all the staff are approachable if they have any concern. An independent listener and other useful helplines are also known to boarders. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school implements its full range of policies for the care of boarders who are unwell. These promote all aspects of boarders' health, including their emotional well-being, first aid, emergency care and the ongoing management of chronic conditions. Separate accommodation, appropriately staffed and with private facilities, is available for any ill or injured boarder. Emergency dental and other professional services can be arranged if necessary. Any medication is securely stored and suitable records are kept, with prescribed medicines only given to the named boarder. Boarders self-medicate only after assessment and parental permission. As patients, boarders' confidentiality is maintained and the right of assessed boarders to refuse treatment is respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Private contact with parents and friends outside boarding is enabled through the house landline or use of the internet, suitably screened for security. This evidence does not support the view of a small minority of boarders responding to the questionnaire, who felt that it is not easy to contact their families. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 All parents responding to the questionnaire stated that their children are safe and happy within the school's boarding provision. Well-organised and managed, fully risk-assessed and clean sleeping accommodation is provided separately for boys and girls. Prompt action maintains the safety of the accommodation. Appropriately separated and private toilets and washing facilities are available to boarders. Their social common rooms offer relaxation and classrooms are close by for study. Accommodation is of appropriate size. It is well lit, heated and ventilated. Adults' accommodation is fully separated from the boarders. All possible reasonable adjustments have been made should there be boarders with restricted mobility. Bedding is warm, clean and comfortable. Boarders may personalise their space. Access to boarding accommodation by unauthorised individuals is prevented by its location within the well-supervised main building. Security arrangements are not intrusive. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 In their responses to the questionnaire, one-half of the boarders indicated that the food is not good. Inspectors found that menus and arrangements are suitable. During the inspection, the meals served were adequate in quantity and of reasonable quality and variety. Special diets are catered for. However, presentation of the food lacks appeal because it is transferred to the dining room from the kitchens in metal containers and covered with foil to retain heat. Few boarders were observed to select the healthy choices available. Kitchens are hygienically maintained. A small minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the provision of snacks. Inspection evidence did not support this view: inspectors found that ample provision of biscuits and healthy snacks is made. Drinking water is available at all times. At the time of the inspection, there were no boarders in the school with disabilities affecting eating, but there are instructions in the boarding staff handbook which fully cover this issue should it arise. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Given the flexible basis of the boarding provision, personal laundry is rarely required, but service is available when needed. Clean bedding is provided for all stays.

Personal items and stationery are available at school. In questionnaire responses, a few pupils said that they feel their belongings are not safe. Inspectors judge that appropriate protection is given for boarders' possessions in school. Boarders are discouraged from bringing money or valuables to school, but staff look after such items when necessary. Protocols for searching boarders' possessions are carried out appropriately if needed. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 A choice of risk-assessed activities is available for boarders on each boarding night and sufficient free time is also provided. Boarders use the indoor and outdoor play areas, and there are safe places where they can be alone. The boarders have appropriate access to information about world events and local facilities. [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 implements its appropriate written policies on health and safety effectively. Premises, accommodation and facilities are suitably maintained. All areas and activities are risk assessed, reviewed and monitored, in fulfilment of the written risk assessment policy. This helps to ensure the health and well-being of the boarders, as far as is reasonably practicable. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 All fire risk management procedures are appropriately carried out, including a regularly reviewed formal fire risk assessment. Fire equipment is suitably checked. Drills are held termly in boarding time and accurate records kept. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding boarders and promoting their welfare are implemented fully. All staff, including the designated lead for safeguarding, and deputies, are appropriately trained in child protection and this training is regularly updated. Links with outside agencies are well established. Thorough records are maintained of any concerns. Response shows that timely professional advice from external agencies is readily taken and acted upon. Policies and procedures are reviewed within the required timeframes and involve the whole governing body. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 All aspects of the policies to manage behaviour have regard to guidance that promotes good behaviour and guards against harassment and bullying, including school rules and disciplinary measures. These are understood by staff and pupils and were seen to work effectively in practice. The required written protocols for using restraint or searching boarders and their possessions indicate clear guidance for staff, should these be necessary. In questionnaire responses, a few boarders indicated that the school does not deal with bullying and that sanctions and rewards are not fairly given. A thorough scrutiny of bullying and behaviour records and the sanctions given, and discussions with staff and boarders, did not support those views. Inspectors found, in particular, that the school responds to any issues related to bullying very promptly and appropriately. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Staff recruitment procedures include a centralised register of appointments that maintains clear records of all the required checks, which are undertaken appropriately. Safer recruitment training has been completed by relevant staff. There are no individuals over the age of 16 not employed by the school living on the same premises as boarders. All visitors are supervised and are escorted if they are likely to enter the boarding areas. The school does not make any arrangements for the appointment of 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's boarding principles and practice documents are published on the website and available for boarders and staff. The principles are fully reflected in practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 All governors and leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively, demonstrating good skills and knowledge. Governors monitor boarding through regular visits and reports, and agree action to improve outcomes. All permanent staff involved with boarding receive suitable training and have good skills, knowledge and experience for their roles. There are effective links amongst staff to ensure that boarders' academic progress and personal development are supported and that their well-being is actively promoted. The leadership checks and oversees the maintenance of all required boarding records. This ensures that the appropriate procedures are followed, and that all aspects of boarding are checked against the standards required and suitably linked to development planning. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Job descriptions are clear for all staff, including volunteers. Boarding induction training on appointment is thorough. Staff performance in boarding is regularly appraised, however apart from the leadership's appraisal, which includes his role as head of boarding, staff reviews are on an informal basis. Training opportunities are provided. Supervision of boarders is always adequate, and the responsibility of qualified and experienced staff. It is always clear that a senior member of staff is in charge. Registration arrangements ensure that staff know the whereabouts of boarders at all times. Staff are familiar with the school's procedures should a boarder go missing. The boarding accommodation is well staffed overnight by duty residents, including the senior leadership. Boarders know who to call at night if necessary and how to make contact. Residential staff accommodation, and boarders' access to this, are appropriate in all respects. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 There is no discrimination on any grounds and equality and understanding are fully promoted. Boarders with SEND or EAL, and those with sports or academic talents, are all individually supported with sensitive care. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In response to the questionnaire, a few boarders indicated that their views are not sought or responded to. Inspectors found that the informal arrangements as currently used work effectively, and that there is a school council to which boarders contribute. All the boarders present during the inspection were happy with the arrangements and felt sure that they are not penalised if they raise a concern in good faith. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 Parents who responded to the questionnaire demonstrated strong support for the school, though a few felt that their concerns are not dealt with well. Comprehensive and detailed records were examined by inspectors, and discussions were held with relevant staff and boarders, and all evidence did not support this view. A complaints policy is available on the school's website for parents to access, and its procedures are implemented appropriately. Any complaints which are related specifically to boarding are identified and any action taken as a result is clearly noted. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 School prefects act as boarding prefects when they stay overnight. Their work is appropriately supervised by staff to ensure that there is no abuse of the role. A very small minority of boarders felt that they are not given a chance to take on responsibility, and a few believe that they are not encouraged to do things for themselves. Inspectors' observations demonstrated that all boarders are given small

day-to-day responsibilities, and evidence does not therefore support this view. [NMS 19]

- 3.23 The school makes use of long-stay lodgings occasionally, when individual boarders come from overseas on a temporary basis. The school maintains meticulous records of its checks and actions, such as its vetting procedures, visits and regular consultations with these boarders, on such occasions. Discussions with the lodgings provider during the inspection and a check of these records confirm their thoroughness. [NMS 20]