



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

TRURO SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Truro School

Full Name of School	Truro School
DfE Number	908/6079
Registered Charity Number	306576
Address	Truro School Trennick Lane Truro Cornwall TR1 1TH
Telephone Number	01872 272763
Fax Number	01872 223431
Email Address	enquiries@truroschoo.com
Headmaster	Mr Andrew Gordon-Brown
Chair of Governors	Mr Kim Conchie
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	785
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (447 boys; 338 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 707
Number of Boarders	Total: 78
	Full: 54 Weekly: 24
Inspection Dates	24 Nov 2015 to 26 Nov 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 chairman of governors and other 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 Robin Lewis

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Ruth Coomber

Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Boarding, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Truro School was founded in 1880 in the centre of Truro by Wesleyan Methodists and moved to its present site on the edge of the city two years later. The preparatory school was opened in 1936 and the school became fully co-educational in 1990. Over the years the school has sought to be a beacon of excellence, aiming to provide a balanced education and thereby produce confident, tolerant and enthusiastic young people who co-operate well and are ready to influence the world. The school is owned by the Methodist Independent Schools Trust. The trust provides oversight that is administered locally by a governing body of 17 members who have a wide variety of experience and skills on which the school draws. These governors oversee the school through a number of committees, including those for education, finance and buildings.
- 1.2 Boarding at the school has a long tradition. The school considers that its community is greatly enhanced by the presence of boarders. Currently, pupils may choose to be full, weekly or flexible boarders, and these pupils form approximately one-tenth of the overall number on roll. Since the previous inspection, a new chair of the local governing body has been elected, a new headmaster and a new bursar have been appointed, and the school's senior leadership has been restructured to include a head of boarding. In addition, a sports centre has been built, and a boarding house has been renovated and reopened to accommodate the increasing numbers of girls who board. There are now four boarding houses, each with resident staff, two houses for younger boys and girls, and two houses for older boys and girls. The houses are situated around the school's estate, so pupils walk from their houses to lessons, a central dining room, the sports centre, a theatre, a chapel and the playing fields.
- 1.3 Of the 785 pupils enrolled at the school, 78 are boarders. There are 54 full boarders, comprising 33 boys and 21 girls, and 24 weekly boarders, comprising 14 boys and 10 girls. These pupils represent the school's entire age range, though the majority of boarders are in Years 11 to 13. Boarders represent a cross section of all abilities, aptitudes and cultural backgrounds found amongst the school's pupils. Within the school as a whole, there are 43 pupils who speak English as an additional language and all receive specialist support from the school. Also within the whole school, 114 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Of these pupils, 58 receive specialist support from the school. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- 1.4 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
First year	Year 7
Second year	Year 8
Third year	Year 9
Fourth year	Year 10
Fifth year	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

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 the transition of designated responsibility for leading safeguarding provides for continuity of the current appropriate standards of care.
2. Explore ways of further increasing the variety of choice in the meals available to boarders, especially to those served towards the end of the sitting.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous integrated inspection, which included boarding welfare, was undertaken by ISI in October 2012. In response to the recommendations made, the school has introduced and implemented a formal appraisal system and a targeted training programme for all boarding staff.

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 undertake a suitable induction programme when they first arrive at school. They also receive guidance and support from a 'buddy' within their house. Each boarder is able to turn to a number of staff for personal guidance on any matter. Within the staff body there are a number of other adults with particular supportive skills, including the school counsellor. Boarders have ready access to this support, contact details being published clearly. Details of external helplines, including the Children's Commissioner, and how to contact the independent listener are prominently displayed in the houses. Almost all pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they have a member of staff to turn to if they feel concerned about something. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school implements comprehensive healthcare policies to enable the effective care of boarders who may be sick or injured. The medical centre has appropriate facilities and is staffed by qualified nurses. Specialist appointments are arranged if required, a doctor provides a weekly drop-in surgery, and counselling and physiotherapy are available on site. Appropriate procedures are established for the storage and administration of medicines, and records kept. Only after detailed individual risk assessment is a boarder allowed to self-medicate. Boarders' confidentiality is maintained. Almost all boarders who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicated that they are well looked after when they become ill. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 A weekly house communication is sent by email to all parents of boarders. Boarders can contact their friends and family electronically, and in a variety of ways. Appropriate monitoring and controls safeguard pupils in their use of electronic communications and promote their welfare. This includes restricting wifi access between 12.00 and 7.00 am. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The boarding houses are clean and suitably furnished, with ample space for studying. Boarders may personalise their own space. There are a suitable number of toilets and washroom facilities in each house, providing appropriate privacy. Boarders may only enter houses other than their own by invitation and after signing the guest register. Houses are secured appropriately and CCTV is in operation around the site. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Boarders' three formal meals are served daily in the school dining hall and the catering department provides for specific dietary needs. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a majority of boarders voiced concerns about food at mealtimes, and a small minority were concerned about the availability of evening snacks. Inspection evidence showed that pupils are provided with a wide choice of food in meals, which are nutritionally balanced. These are prepared in a hygienically maintained and efficient kitchen. In discussions with boarders, it was apparent that their criticisms stem both from personal, cultural preferences and the fact that occasionally the provision of more popular choices may have run out by the time latecomers arrive. Boarders have access to drinking water at all times and they select their house-based evening snacks from a list provided by the catering department. Their comments concerning the availability of these snacks in 'boarding time' related to the occasional over-indulgence of some, in the self-policed distribution of these refreshments in the senior houses. Further evidence from interviews indicated that remedial discussions had already proved effective, without

the need for staff intervention. No pupils currently require special assistance at mealtimes. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 Boarders' clothing and bedding are laundered centrally and returned the next day. Boarders may also wash their own clothes in their houses, which many choose to do. Stationery and personal items are purchased easily from local shops, which pupils may visit with permission. All boarders are provided with lockable space for their personal possessions; if they wish, valuables and money may be deposited with staff for additional security. The school has procedures, in line with official guidance, for staff to follow should it be necessary to search a boarder's belongings. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A wide range of sporting, creative and calmer activities is available for boarders to choose from outside lesson time and usually using the school's on-site facilities, with suitable risk assessments undertaken. If pupils wish they may have time alone; for example, choosing to sit in the library or chapel, or finding a safe space somewhere within the school's estate. Boarders can keep informed about events in the world through newspapers, magazines and the internet, all of which are available in houses. [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 has an appropriately detailed health and safety policy and risk assessment policy. The premises, accommodation and facilities are suitably maintained, thereby promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including boarders. Activities on and off the site are subject to effective risk assessments and action is taken to mitigate any anticipated risks. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school complies with all current fire safety legislation. Checks on alarms and equipment are undertaken regularly. Fire drills are carried out at least termly and also during 'boarding time'. Boarders are familiar with procedures, and records of evacuation times are kept and reviewed. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 All staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training on appointment, as well as regular reminders and updates on policies and procedures. The governors review the safeguarding policy annually and are aware of their corporate safeguarding responsibilities. In recent months, staff changes and anticipated appointments have meant that undertaking of the role of the school's designated safeguarding officers has been in transition. Whilst this evolution continues, the standard of pupils' safeguarding has been appropriately maintained. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Policies on promoting positive behaviour and relationships are understood, implemented and known by pupils. These include measures to combat bullying, including cyber-bullying, and to be taken in the event of needing to use physical restraint. In discussions, pupils at all levels indicated their enjoyment when receiving commendations, and pupils of all ages compete to achieve these rewards. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they like being at the school and that they feel safe in their boarding house. A small minority indicated that they do not feel sanctions are given fairly in the school at large. During formal and informal discussions with boarders, they indicated confidence that any sanctions that might be necessary would, in their houses, be fair, and records confirmed this. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident that if there were any issues they would be dealt with swiftly. Pupils enjoy boarding and harmonious relationships exist within the houses. [NMS 12]

- 3.14 The school operates safe recruitment procedures as required. All staff are appropriately checked before commencing work and records kept centrally within the school. The role of spouses or partners is made clear, and an agreement is signed which includes taking responsibility for their visitors. Such visitors may not enter pupils' accommodation. All visitors to the boarding houses are suitably supervised. Boarders do not enter staff accommodation except under specially supervised circumstances. The school does not appoint 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 A suitable statement of boarding practice and principles is available to parents and staff, made known to boarders, and is seen to work in the life of the school. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Leadership and management of boarding provide appropriate guidance for all areas of boarding and the development of practice. The team of boarding staff is suitably trained and has appropriate qualifications, expertise and numbers. Their training is updated as necessary and opportunities are provided to gain further relevant qualifications through a targeted training system, planned and introduced in response to a recommendation of the previous inspection. Senior boarding staff use a wealth of experience to lead their houses, and they link pastoral care with the support given by the academic day staff to ensure the welfare of boarders. All records are maintained clearly and securely in electronic form or hard copy and may be accessed by appropriate staff. Records are monitored with appropriate frequency, being updated as necessary. As a result, boarders' development, progress and welfare are actively promoted and receive appropriate attention. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Staff and any volunteers have job descriptions that reflect their duties. On appointment they receive induction training that encompasses boarding, and thereafter they join the planned programme of professional development, including updates on regulatory changes and the review of performance. This is in response to a recommendation made at the previous inspection. The code of conduct gives clear guidance and warnings concerning appropriate contact between staff and pupils. Duty boarding staff are aware of their boarders' whereabouts, and know how to implement the school's policy and procedures should a pupil go missing. Each boarding house has two resident staff, in accommodation suitably separate from boarders. The straightforward procedures for contacting house staff at night are known by boarders and used when necessary. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 In their houses and in school life, boarders are not discriminated against; particular regard is paid to the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that no pupils are disadvantaged as a result of their cultural or linguistic background, academic or sporting ability or special educational needs. Staff pay scrupulous attention to procedures in order to operate them fairly in ways that pupils recognise as just. Such matters are considered so that the care offered is sensitive to different needs. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of boarders indicated that their views and opinions are not sought or responded to by the school. Inspectors found that boarders' views are actively sought, for example through surveys, regular house meetings and informal discussions. These views are given appropriate weight in decisions taken, and pupils are not penalised for raising any concern or complaint. [NMS 17]

- 3.21 Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed complete satisfaction with the school's arrangements for boarding. A suitable complaints procedure is published on the school's website and action is taken in line with the policy as a result of any complaint. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of boarders indicated that they do not have the opportunity to take responsibility. Inspectors found that pupils are given suitable opportunities to take on responsibilities within their boarding houses. The prefects and the pupil heads of boarding have appropriate responsibilities and a variety of duties. Their role includes canvassing boarders' opinions, and in recognising any injustice and bringing it to the attention of staff. Prefects have received training in their roles and responsibilities, and suitable measures ensure that they do not abuse their roles. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]