



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WINDERMERE SCHOOL AND WINDERMERE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Windermere School and Windermere Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Windermere School and Windermere Preparatory School		
DfE Number	909/6008		
Registered Charity Number	526973		
Address	Windermere School Patterdale Road Browhead Windermere Cumbria LA23 1NW		
Telephone Number	01539 446164		
Fax Number	01539 488414		
Email Address	jjones@windermereschool.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Ian Lavender		
Chairman of Governors	Mr Michael Dwan		
Age Range	2 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	391		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (187 boys; 204 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	11	5-11: 98
	3-5 (EYFS):	29	11-18: 253
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	103	
Number of Boarders	Total:	150	
	Full:	124	Weekly: 18 Flexi: 8
Inspection Dates	03 Feb 2015 to 05 Feb 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) (England) 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 a governor, 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 Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Mr Garry Binks	Team Inspector for Boarding (Housemaster, HMC school)
Mrs Deborah Newman	Team Inspector for Boarding (Principal, Society of Heads school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Windermere School is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged 2 to 18. It comprises a preparatory school for pupils aged 2 to 11 and a senior school for pupils 11 to 18. It was founded in 1863 and is situated on the outskirts of the town of the same name in the heart of the Lake District, overlooking Lake Windermere. The two sections are about a mile apart; the few preparatory school boarders are housed on the senior school site.
- 1.2 The school is a charitable trust and is overseen by a governing body. The senior school has 253 pupils on roll, 127 boys and 126 girls, and the preparatory school has 138 pupils on roll, 60 boys and 78 girls. In total, 75 boys and 75 girls are boarders, including 119 senior and 5 preparatory full boarders, 16 senior and 2 preparatory weekly boarders, and 7 senior and 1 preparatory pupil who board on a flexible basis. The school has identified 53 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There are 84 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.3 Windermere School aims to equip its pupils with the skills, values and qualifications that provide an enduring foundation for the future. It aspires to excellence in all things, and seeks to provide a safe and caring family environment where boarding pupils can flourish academically, socially and personally.
- 1.4 Browhead, the girls' boarding house, is at the top of the main school building. The boys' boarding house, Langdale, is a free-standing building on the campus, as is Westmorland, which houses nearly all of the sixth-form boarders. A small number of sixth-form boys are accommodated in North Lodge.
- 1.5 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 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Give house prefects appropriate training in safeguarding and child protection.
2. Display in the kitchen or the serving area a list of pupils with special dietary needs.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in March 2012. No recommendations were made in relation to boarding welfare 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 The induction programme, which successfully helps new boarders to settle in, incorporates a 'buddy' system and, for some, taster days before they start as boarders. The completion of a boarding induction checklist helps to ensure that new boarders have access to all necessary information and are familiar with house and school routines. A small minority of boarders said in their questionnaire responses that there is no member of staff or senior pupil to whom they could turn with a personal difficulty and that they are unsure of what to do if they are unhappy or worried about something. Inspection evidence showed that house and other staff are readily available. Those boarders interviewed made it clear that there are many adults, including the independent listener, to whom they can turn with personal concerns. Helplines published on the house notice boards include that of the Children's Commissioner. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Appropriate policies are implemented for the care of sick or injured boarders. A small minority of boarders said in response to the questionnaire that they are not well treated when ill or injured. Inspection evidence does not support the view. The school's provision covers: first aid; chronic conditions and disabilities; emergencies, including those at night-time; and administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication. Only identified sixth-form pupils are allowed to self-medicate: records in this regard, as elsewhere, are appropriately maintained. The new medical centre is attached to one of the boarding houses and there is close liaison between medical and all residential staff. Patient confidentiality is respected. Parents give signed consent to certain treatments and to boarders' access to local medical, dental, optometric and other specialist services or provision. The school has a close relationship with a nearby medical practice, where a period of time is reserved each day for pupil appointments. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 The minority of pupil respondents to the questionnaire who said that it is not easy to contact family and friends appear to have been referring to a difficulty with communication which has now been resolved. Boarders confirmed that they can now readily make such contact, electronically or by telephone. The school educates pupils about e-safety and cyber-bullying; suitable controls are applied regarding the use of computers and access to internet material. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 In the boarding accommodation, public and private rooms are furnished and decorated to varying standards, although all are adequate; a programme of upgrading is being undertaken. All of the boarding premises are appropriately lit, heated, ventilated and cleaned. Bedding is clean and warm. The quality of the mattresses is uneven. The boarding houses are well supplied with lavatories, showers and baths, all of which afford privacy. Boarding facilities for boys and girls are separate. Preparatory school boarders' dormitories and other facilities are separate from those of the older boarders. There is suitable provision for organised and private study. Boarders are able to personalise their own rooms with photographs, posters and items from home. The accommodation is reserved for designated boarders and CCTV cameras do not intrude on privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 In their responses to the questionnaire, a majority of boarders stated that they are dissatisfied with the food and with the availability of snacks and drinking water

outside mealtimes. The evidence of the inspection does not support these views. Food is plentiful and nutritious, and includes dishes appropriate to an international community. Meals are prepared and served in hygienic conditions. Pupils with special dietary needs are appropriately catered for, but no list of these pupils is displayed in the kitchen or the serving area, with the result that it cannot be guaranteed that all kitchen staff can identify them. The boarding houses have well-equipped kitchens, where pupils may prepare snacks, light meals and hot drinks. All of those interviewed expressed satisfaction with these arrangements, with some reservations about the food provided in the houses. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 Senior pupils are responsible for laundering their own clothes and the laundry arrangements for the younger pupils are efficient. Sixth-form pupils have access to the local shops; younger pupils may go into the town on Saturdays, as well as being able to buy small personal items at school. Passports are lodged with house staff for safe keeping. A small minority of pupil respondents to the questionnaire said that their belongings are not safe. This was not borne out by inspection evidence: boarders all have safes in their houses as well as access to large lockers in the main school. Those interviewed said that there is an atmosphere of trust and that their possessions are safe. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A wide range of weekend activities takes place in school, in the surrounding area and elsewhere in the country. A minority of questionnaire respondents said that they are not happy with the balance of free time and activities in the evenings and at weekends. Inspection evidence showed that there are many opportunities for participation in sports and outdoor activities, as well as visits to places of cultural and recreational interest. Many activities also take place on weekday afternoons and evenings. The school provides safe indoor and outdoor recreational areas, and places where pupils can be alone. Those boarders interviewed appreciated the busy activity programme and its suitability for all ages. Television, newspapers and the internet keep boarders in touch with news and events in the wider world. Boarders have access to local facilities that are appropriate to their age. [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 relevant policies and procedures to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to promote the health and welfare of its pupils. Close attention is paid to the management of risk; suitable risk assessments cover life in the school and the many activities that take place locally and further afield. The risk management group exercises effective oversight of this aspect of school life. The boarders say that they are very well cared for and that they feel safe. All of the parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school keeps their children safe and stated that they would recommend the school to another parent. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school has an appropriate fire safety policy. Boarding fire evacuation drills are held regularly, including at times when boarders may be expected to be asleep. Checks and tests are undertaken at specified intervals on equipment and appliances, both internally and by external consultants and agencies. All records are appropriately maintained. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school makes the required arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all of its pupils. Appropriately trained, the staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and child protection. Senior staff with special responsibility for safeguarding meet regularly and keep full records of any cases or

matters of concern. The governing body undertakes an annual review of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their implementation. [NMS 11]

- 3.13 School rules and policies to guard against bullying, for restraint, searching boarders and their possessions, and promoting good behaviour are all clear and are understood by the boarders. They are implemented effectively. In their questionnaire responses, most of the boarders agreed that they get on well together. A very small minority said that the school does not deal with any bullying that occurs. Inspection evidence, including the school's bullying log, indicates that the few recorded cases are satisfactorily resolved. All of the boarders interviewed stated that relationships within the boarding houses are very good and that bullying is not a concern. They were confident that any instances are dealt with promptly and successfully. A minority of respondents to the questionnaire said that teachers are not fair in the way they gave rewards and sanctions and that boarding staff do not treat them fairly. During the inspection, rewards and sanctions were found to be fair and proportionate. Those boarders interviewed were happy with the way in which they are treated by house staff. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school operates safe recruitment procedures and the single central register of appointments is accurately maintained. Visitors to boarding houses are appropriately supervised to ensure the boarders' safety. Individuals over the age of 16, such as members of staff families, who are not employed by the school but who live on the same premises as boarders are checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and enter into a written agreement with the school, specifying the terms of their accommodation. Where the school arranges the guardianship of boarders, the guardians appropriately undergo the same DBS and other checks as newly appointed members of staff. Where families host boarders during the holidays under the school's aegis, all family members over the age of 16 also have the same recruitment checks as members of staff. The arrangements for guardians and host families are regularly monitored. [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 boarding principles and practice is published on the school's website, in documentation and on house notice boards. It is made known to boarders and fully implemented. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 All of the parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that boarding is well organised and managed effectively, and the evidence of the inspection supports this view. Leadership and management of boarding are clear. Weekly meetings of the head of boarding, housemasters and housemistresses ensure that the boarding provision is fully and regularly discussed. On an annual allocated day, the boarding staff evaluate all aspects of boarding life against the NMS. There are close links between the residential and academic staff, including those with responsibility for teaching pupils who have SEND and those who have EAL. The small size of the school allows effective lines of communication, both formal and informal. Senior boarding staff are sufficiently experienced and trained. The required records are suitably maintained and monitored, with action taken as appropriate. The centrality of boarding to the school's character is recognised in the school's strategic, business and development plans. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Boarding staff have job descriptions and appropriate induction. They also have the opportunity to benefit from in-house and external training courses. These staff are

being appraised as part of the present cycle of professional development. Supervision of pupils is suitable and effectively monitored, both on the school campus and when out on trips and expeditions. At all times boarders know who is responsible for them, and a signing-out system operates in the boarding houses. Staff are aware of the procedure to follow if a pupil were to go missing. At least one adult is resident in each house overnight and boarders say that they can easily contact such staff necessary. All staff accommodation is completely separate from that of the boarders. Boarders' access to staff accommodation is appropriately conducted and supervised. [NMS 15]

- 3.19 The school successfully implements its equality and anti-discrimination policy. In all aspects of school life the staff are sensitive to different boarders' needs, backgrounds and cultural traditions. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Half of the boarders who responded to the questionnaire said that the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to them. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Opportunities for opinions to be expressed include boarding forums, suggestion boxes and pupil surveys, and boarders say that staff and senior pupils are very approachable. Proposals from pupils have effected improvements, for instance to menus and facilities in houses. Pupils know that they will not be punished for making complaints or expressing concerns made in good faith. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 An appropriate complaints procedure is available to parents, who say in their questionnaire responses that they are happy with the way in which concerns are handled. Detailed records of complaints are kept; these show that complaints are responded to promptly and resolved satisfactorily. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 House prefects are collectively known as house councils. They are elected by their peers. They have appropriate job descriptions and receive introductory training for their responsibilities, but this does not include training in safeguarding and child protection. Their main roles are to help to ensure the smooth running of the house and to promote a happy, caring and well-integrated community. The prefects are described by the younger boarders as kind and helpful. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school arranges lodgings for pupils during half term and longer school holidays. Its procedures comply fully with requirements. These include appropriate checks and visits, written agreements and guidance given to host families, together with regular monitoring and assessments by all parties at the end of a stay. The host family is provided with helpful information in the form of a pupil 'profile', and also receives, where appropriate, a schedule of academic work for the pupil to follow. [NMS 20]