



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WORTH SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Worth School

Full Name of School	Worth School
DfE Number	938/6208
Registered Charity Number	1093914
Address	Worth School Paddockhurst Road Turners Hill Crawley West Sussex RH10 4SD UK
Telephone Number	01342 710200
Fax Number	01342 710230
Email Address	gcarminati@worth.org.uk
Head	Mr Gino Carminati
President of Governors	Father Luke Jolly
Chair of Governors	Mrs Alda Andreotti
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	587
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (409 boys; 178 girls)
Numbers by Age	11-18: 587
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 284
Number of Full Boarders	Total: 303
Inspection dates	02 Dec 2014 to 04 Dec 2014

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, as amended. 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 January 2011 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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 and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding, 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

Mrs Gwen Caddock

Mr Tim Dewes

Mr Peter Goodyer

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Deputy Head, HMC school)

Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Headmaster, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Worth School is a co-educational Catholic day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of 11 to 18. The school is attached to the Benedictine Abbey of Our Lady Help of Christians, Worth Abbey. The key aims of the school are rooted in the Benedictine tradition and values, enabling pupils with a wide range of abilities to fulfil their potential in a safe, caring, community-based environment in which pupils can learn. About one-half of the pupils are baptised Catholics and the school welcomes members of other faiths and those with none. The governing body of the school, which has responsibility for the oversight and for day-to-day running of the school, has both lay and monastic members, all of whom are appointed by the board of governors. The Abbot of Worth is ex-officio president of the board and there is an independent chairman of governors. The school occupies buildings owned by Worth Abbey. The school is run as a charitable trust and the governors are the trustees.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1933 on the present site, a 500 acre estate in West Sussex alongside Worth Abbey, when the monastic community moved from the Abbey at Downside. The school began as a preparatory school for boys, admitting senior boys in 1959 and sixth-form girls in 2008. Younger girls joined the school in 2010 and the school became fully co-educational in 2012.
- 1.3 The school currently has 587 pupils on roll, 409 boys and 178 girls and of these 233 are in the sixth form. The school is almost evenly divided between day and boarding pupils. All pupils are members of a school house and five houses offer accommodation for boarders, four for boys and one for girls. The latest development in the school was the opening of a new boys' boarding house, St Bede's, in 2012. The school has identified 174 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, (SEND) and, of these, 100 receive specialist learning support from the school. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. One hundred and twenty-nine pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and 42 receive support for their English.
- 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 2013.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Make suitable internet facilities available at times when it is easy for overseas boarders to be able to make contact with their families and friends, taking time-zone differences into account.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in January 2011. The overall judgement of boarding was outstanding and no recommendations were made.

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 House handbooks, induction days, the buddy system and the warm welcome they receive helps boarders to settle in. There are many staff and senior pupils to whom boarders can turn for support. House notice boards display contact details for external help lines, the Children's Commissioner and an independent listener. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has a range of comprehensive medical policies. All staff receive first aid training. The centrally situated medical centre is available to boarders, day and night, offering appropriate separate accommodation for boarders who are ill. Qualified staff are supported by general practitioner surgeries in school and other local health services. Policies and practice for the storage and provision of medicines to the correct boarder are robust; senior pupils self-medicate following assessment. Boarders' rights and confidentiality are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are generally able to communicate with home easily, using their own and school telephones and the internet which is available in houses. Suitable cyber safety measures are carried out. A small minority of boarders, including some from the Far East, reported in their responses to the questionnaire that it is difficult to make contact at times convenient to their parents. The inspectors agree with these views. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarders' accommodation is comfortable, well-maintained and clean. The houses are well-furnished and appropriately separated by gender. Younger boarders often share bedrooms and all study centrally; most of the older pupils have single bedsits. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their rooms. Washroom and toilet facilities are clean and accessible to boarders, offering suitable privacy. All houses have well-furnished social areas. They are appropriately secure, and measures to protect boarders do not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 A minority of pupils in their responses to the questionnaire reported dissatisfaction with school food and with the availability of snacks at other times, but inspectors did not find such concerns to be justified. Menus include nutritious, varied and plentiful choices of food which are prepared and served hygienically. Careful provision is made for those with dietary requirements and occasional themed days provide extra variety. The relaxed "Pit-Stop" café is open during the day and at evening. Provisions and drinking water are available for house kitchens. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 The laundry system is efficient and reliable. Boarders can purchase stationery and toiletries from the "Pit-Stop" and the local town. Bedrooms have secure storage areas for boarders' personal items. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A minority of boarders in their responses to the questionnaire indicated that they do not feel there is a suitable balance between activities and free time. In discussion boarders said that they lead busy lives but enjoy the opportunities to take part in the wide range of activities and trips which is offered in the evenings and at weekends. Inspectors found that there are quiet areas for boarders who wish to be alone and suitable time for reflection. Televisions, newspapers and the internet enable boarders to keep abreast of events outside school. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 Thorough policies and arrangements protect the welfare, health and safety of boarders. Procedures established allow continuous monitoring and improvement of practice, and maintenance procedures are efficient. Trips and activities are risk assessed and suitably planned. Exterior lighting is installed across the site. The school has built a footbridge to provide safe access to the playing fields. Vehicular movement on the site is regularly reviewed. Boarders say they feel safe at school. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Appropriate policies and precautions are taken against fire. Centrally recorded fire drills are carried out regularly, including in boarding time. Fire appliances are properly checked and maintained. The school has a good relationship with the local fire authorities and recommendations made are promptly implemented. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school's arrangements to safeguard boarders are effective. All staff are regularly trained in child protection procedures. Safeguarding updates are issued to staff throughout the year. Induction includes child protection training for new staff and all are aware of the importance of listening to boarders. The school relates well with local agencies, and safeguarding is carefully monitored by the governing body. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school implements a range of policies to promote good behaviour and appropriate records are kept. The school's Benedictine foundation underpins the life of the community. The system of rewards and sanctions is well understood by boarders. In their responses to the questionnaire, a minority indicated that rewards and sanctions were not consistently applied by teachers. Inspectors, through discussions with staff and examining the records of behavioural issues and the sanctions given which were appropriate, did not find evidence to support this concern. Boarders interviewed during the inspection felt that boarding staff treated them fairly. Measures to combat bullying are suitably carried out and records show that a small number of incidents have been properly dealt with. Boarders indicated in discussions that bullying is rare and that they feel safe in their houses. Younger boarders appreciate the help given to them by older boarders. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Procedures for safe recruitment of staff are suitably undertaken. Appropriate checks are carried out and recorded on the single central register. Non-employees living in the same premises as boarders are vetted and have signed appropriate agreements. All visitors to the boarding houses are supervised and no-one has unauthorised access. 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 The school publishes its principles and practice of boarding set out in the context of the Benedictine culture and values of the school which frame the life of the boarders. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The management and leadership of boarding ensure development through careful analysis and consultation. Comprehensive information on academic and pastoral matters is discussed and used by staff to ensure the well-being of boarders. Senior staff are experienced and appropriately trained in boarding. All the required records are maintained and monitored. [NMS 13]

- 3.18 Boarding staff have clear job descriptions, receive comprehensive induction into boarding responsibilities and regular reviews of their work. They receive in-house and external training. Detailed rotas ensure that sufficient staff are on duty in boarding houses. Duty staff know the whereabouts of boarders and can contact them using their mobile phone numbers if necessary. All staff know the protocol for a missing boarder and implement it if needed. At least one member of staff sleeps in every boarding house at night and boarders know how to make contact. Appropriate staff accommodation is suitably separated from the boarders' areas. Clear guidance is given to staff that boarders have only supervised access to staff accommodation and there is no inappropriate contact or favouritism between adults and boarders. [NMS15]
- 3.19 The school has clear policies which ensure that both boys and girls who board do not experience discrimination and enjoy equal opportunities, including overseas boarders. The care of boarders is highly sensitive to their individual needs. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In questionnaire responses a small minority of boarders indicated that they did not feel that the school asked for or responded to their opinions, but inspection evidence did not support these concerns. Minutes of meetings held with boarders showed that their views are fully taken into consideration. In interviews boarders said that they are represented on house and whole school councils and committees and that all boarders receive email responses to the issues raised. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school publishes an appropriate policy and procedure on responding to complaints and records show that this is followed in practice. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Senior pupils undertake a variety of roles as prefects across the school and in boarding houses; they have clear job descriptions, receive thorough training, including safeguarding, and are appropriately supervised. Representatives spoke of their pride in their work as, for example, chaplaincy prefects and the whole school benefits from their service. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20]