



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

RYE ST ANTONY SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Rye St Antony School

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|------------|------------------------|
| Full Name of School | Rye St Antony School | | |
| DfE Number | 931/6070 | | |
| Registered Charity Number | 309685 | | |
| Address | Rye St Antony School Pullen's Lane Oxford OX3 0BY | | |
| Telephone Number | 01865 762802 | | |
| Fax Number | 01865 763611 | | |
| Email Address | headmistress@ryestantony.co.uk | | |
| Headmistress | Miss Alison Jones | | |
| Chair of Governors | Mrs Hilary Stafford Northcote | | |
| Age Range | 3 to 19 | | |
| Total Number of Pupils | 353 | | |
| Gender of Pupils | Girls 3-18; Boys 3-8 years | | |
| Numbers by Age | 3-5 (EYFS) | 27 | 5-11: 64 |
| | 11-18 | 262 | |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: | 298 | |
| Number of Boarders | Total: | 55 | |
| | Full: | 49 | Weekly/Flexi: 6 |
| Inspection dates | 30 Apr 2014 to 02 May 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 June 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, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration sessions and an assembly. 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 Ruth McFarlane

Reporting Inspector

Mr Paul Johnstone

Team Inspector for Boarding (former Head, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Rye St Antony School in Oxford is a Catholic day and boarding school for girls aged from three to eighteen years and for boys aged from three to eight years. It was founded in 1930 and is a charitable trust managed by a board of fourteen governors, five of whom are trustees of the charity.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a Christian education which will enable all pupils to develop their talents and foster qualities of character that will lead naturally into responsible adult life.
- 1.3 There are 353 pupils on roll (328 girls and 25 boys). The school has identified 84 pupils as having learning special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. In total, 75 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.4 The school offers full, weekly and flexi-boarding, and occasional and short-stay boarding, depending on individual needs, for girls aged 10 and over. Currently, all the 55 boarders are over the age of 11, and about half are from overseas. Boarding accommodation is provided in two boarding houses within the school grounds. Boarders aged 10 to 15 years are accommodated in The Croft and older boarders, including sixth formers, are accommodated in The Cottage.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report, and by the school, to refer to year groups.

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. Replace written references to the Children's Rights Director with information about and the contact details of the recently established Office of the Children's Commissioner.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in June 2011. Boarding was rated outstanding and there were no recommendations for improvement. The school has continued to develop the boarding arrangements and facilities since that time.

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 All boarders describe a wide range of accessible and helpful assistance given to them before and on arrival. Handbooks and mentors inform them of boarding and school routines. Official avenues of support beyond school are advertised and known. However, references and contact details of the newly established Office of the Children's Commissioner are not evident. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Appropriate policies and practice underpin boarder health and well-being. Medicines are correctly issued, stored and secured. Boarders only self-medicate when assessed as competent to do so. Confidentiality and rights are respected to give or withhold consent to treatment. Boarder comments reflect heartfelt appreciation of boarding staff, including the two nurses who manage the medical centre and whose roles extend to class teaching on matters of health and well-being. Appropriate information concerning medications for boarders is shared promptly between the medical centre and the houses. Arrangements for day or overnight accommodation of sick boarders are efficient. Specialist medical attention is available from hospitals and practices nearby. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders may contact their families readily and privately through electronic media, landlines or mobile telephones. School systems ensure safe use of the internet. A small minority of questionnaire responses said contact with family or friends was not easy. This was not borne out during discussions or checks of procedures. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The boarding facilities are reserved for boarders and protected from unauthorised access. All the boarders said that they feel safe at school. The accommodation is appropriate, clean and well maintained, well lit and heated and safely ventilated. Reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate any disabilities. Boarders can and do personalise their own areas, and many say how much they enjoy their surroundings. Secure entry systems and screening are unobtrusive. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Although a majority of boarders indicated in questionnaire responses that the food is not good, many boarders with whom this was discussed praised the food and said it had improved recently. The four-week menu cycle offers varied, nutritious menus, including special dietary requirements, prepared in hygienic surroundings. Fresh fruit, water, and milk are always available. A small minority of questionnaire responses expressed discontent with the availability of snacks, but this was not supported by boarders' spoken opinions or examination of the arrangements. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Care of boarders' laundry is regular and personal. Older boarders are permitted to manage their own. Each boarder has a lockable space beside her bed. High-value articles may be stored in house offices. Stationery and other personal items may be obtained in the houses or in school, or locally according to age-appropriate rules. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders are happy with the balance of unstructured time alone or with their friends. Activities include cultural and sporting pursuits such as yoga, dancing, and arts and crafts. Varied weekend events include bowling and ice-skating. Boarders also use the park-like setting to the full. They keep in touch with the outside world through various media. Newspapers and magazines in the library and in the houses are often marked to indicate suitability to specific ages. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The written health and safety policies comply with all current legislation. Regular liaison with external professionals assists the school to cover and implement all required aspects. Thus school premises, accommodation and facilities protect the well-being and safety of all boarders, as far as is practicable. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Fire safety procedures are suitable. There are a number of staff trained as fire marshals. Automatic door activation, when the alarm sounds, facilitates safe, speedy exit. Records show that drills occur at least twice per term, including during boarding time and at night. Boarders are familiar with the procedure. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The safeguarding policy reflects all the relevant guidance. It is available to parents on the website and also by request. Senior staff, trained to the appropriate level at the required intervals, implement the policy correctly. All staff are trained in safeguarding on joining the school and at regular intervals thereafter. They sign to confirm training and familiarity with relevant paperwork. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 School policies, practices and handbooks comply with relevant legislation and guidance. Staff understand the standards the policies establish for good behaviour and positive conduct, including school rules, measures to counteract bullying, sanctions, and use of search or restraint. A few responses to the questionnaire considered that some teachers were unfair in their rewards or sanctions, and that bullying was not effectively dealt with. Checks of records and discussions with boarders could demonstrate no evidence to support these opinions. Boarders consider the arrangements to be effective and fair. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 All guidance for safer recruitment is followed so that prospective staff are checked thoroughly for their suitability to work with children before appointment. Details are recorded appropriately in a single central register. There are policies to ensure that legislation is complied with regarding those over 16 not employed by the school but living on the site, but currently there are none. Visitors are suitably supervised to prevent any unauthorised access to boarders or their accommodation. Guardians are required for pupils from overseas, but the school is clear that the responsibility for appointment lies with parents. [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 An annually reviewed statement of boarding principles and practice is available for parents and is displayed in both boarding houses as well as in the boarders' induction handbook and staff induction handbook. Day-to-day practice in the houses fully meets its principles. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Leadership and management of boarding are clearly structured around a team approach. Staff are experienced and qualified. A governor is designated as a boarding link and the chair of the governing body also takes a keen interest and monitors provision. Each boarding house contributes to an in-depth review detailing how each of the National Minimum Standards is met and this feeds into the whole-school plans for development. Communication between house staff is managed through diary books and other records. Links between academic staff and residential staff are forged through regular meetings. All the necessary records are maintained and monitored and action taken and recorded as appropriate. [NMS 13]

- 3.18 All boarding staff have a fitting job description and undergo annual professional reviews. Boarding staff induction training includes the school framework for boarding, fire awareness, safety and security, child protection, health and welfare, the use and recording of medication, and food hygiene. There are at least two identified and qualified staff on duty daily and resident overnight in the house, in appropriately separate accommodation. Boarders are aware of who is on duty each evening and how to contact an adult overnight should the need arise. They do not go inside the staff accommodation. Procedures for signing in and out of the houses ensure that staff know the whereabouts of boarders at all times. Processes described in the 'missing child' policy are known by boarders and staff. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders confirm that staff treat them equally. All boarders and staff support an ethos of considerate behaviour and mutual respect and say that there is no discrimination. Cultural and other differences are celebrated and respected. The policies support the needs of all, including those with EAL or SEND. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 The views of the few boarders who indicated in responses to the questionnaire that their opinions are not asked for or listened to were not echoed by the many with whom this was discussed. Boarders can easily raise concerns without fear of recrimination and in a variety of ways including directly with staff, through the mentor system, through the school patricians (prefects), through the school council or the various boarder committees including the food committee, the health and safety committee and the recently formed boarding committee. Boarders can point to improvements as a result of their suggestions, for instance in the food provision. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school responds to any complaints following published procedures which can be found on the website and which meet all requirements. All the parents who stated a view in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses expressed great satisfaction with the boarding arrangements. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The patricians are well-known, respected and valued by boarders, who see them as models of service and care of others. Their responsibilities do not include imposing discipline. Their duties are clearly defined in writing and through training and they are guided by senior staff. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20 not applicable]