



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Catherine's School

Full Name of School	St Catherine's School		
DfE Number	936/6004		
Registered Charity Number	1070858		
Address	St Catherine's School Station Road Bramley Guildford Surrey GU5 0DF		
Telephone Number	01483 893363		
Fax Number	01483 899608		
Email Address	alice.phillips@stcatherines.info		
Head	Mrs A M Phillips		
Chair of Governors	PJ Martin		
Age Range	4 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	895		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 230
	3-5 (EYFS):	32	11-18: 633
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	746	
Number of Boarders	Total:	149	
	Full:	85	Weekly: 64
Inspection dates	20 Jan 2014 to 22 Jan 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 September 2009 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 specific oversight of safeguarding and pastoral care, 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 Martin Ayres

Mrs Sally Cunliffe

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Senior House Mistress, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Catherine's was founded in 1885 and is a day and boarding school for girls between the ages of four and eighteen, situated in extensive grounds in the village of Bramley, near Guildford in Surrey. The school's aims are to provide an excellent all-round, boarding and weekly boarding education which will prepare girls for happy and fulfilling lives. This is to be underpinned by consistently strong teaching, a wide range of activities and the provision of extensive school facilities and resources. A Church of England foundation, the school promotes Christian values, thoughts and deeds and actively encourages respect, courtesy and concern for others. The school is a charity governed by its trustees, who are appointed for their experience and expertise.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection 633 girls aged from eleven to eighteen were in the senior school, 230 girls aged five to eleven were in the prep school with 32 in the EYFS. Of the 149 boarders, 85 boarded full-time and 64 weekly. Day pupils mostly come from within a fifteen-mile radius of the school and from a variety of backgrounds. Boarders also include children from several other countries.
- 1.3 The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Pre-preparatory/Preparatory/Junior Department

School	NC name
Pre-Prep 1	Reception
Pre-Prep 2	Year 1
Pre-Prep 3	Year 2
Form 1	Year 3
Lower II	Year 4
Upper III	Year 5
Lower III	Year 6

Senior School/Upper School

School	NC name
Upper III	Year 7
Lower IV	Year 8
Upper IV	Year 9
Lower V	Year 10
Upper V	Year 11
Lower VI	Year 12
Upper VI	Year 13

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. Review the provision of meals, including at weekends, to ensure that boarders have wider food choices.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in September 2009. Three recommendations then made included the manner in which medication records are maintained, the management of health and welfare needs and staff recruitment checking processes. All of these previous recommendations have been acted upon and fully resolved.

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 Boarders are consistently helped by all school staff, who are well versed in policies arrangements for boarder induction and support. A parents' guide to boarding provides useful information and specific advice on the boarding experience at the school. Opportunities are established to enable boarders to obtain information and to seek help and guidance on personal matters. Boarders are part of the day house system from which they are allocated a tutor. Sixth-form girls, as far as possible, are linked to a subject specific area which they report as being very helpful. Boarders have access to an independent listener to whom they can turn as necessary. Contact details for this person are provided in conjunction with details of other external contacts including *ChildLine* and Ofsted. Boarders are clear about these arrangements and confident about seeking help and support if needed. (NMS 2)
- 3.3 Appropriate policies are established for the care of boarders who are unwell. They include the administration of medicines and prescribed drugs. A specific medical policy includes the aims and contact details of the medical centre staff team. Effective external health links are well established, including dental, optometric and other specialist medical services. Boarders receive good quality health care when they are ill and medical centre support and resources are of a high quality. A protocol is in place to determine a boarder's competence to self-medicate and this is applied sensibly in practice. Prescriptions are used only by the boarder for whom they are actually prescribed and this is effectively monitored and recorded. The school operates effective processes to ensure appropriate levels of confidentiality. (NMS 3)
- 3.4 Suitable facilities are available to enable boarders to contact their parents, carers or relatives in private. (NMS 4)
- 3.5 The boarders' living accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size. Most rooms have study desks and good lighting and alternative study areas are provided within designated areas in houses or other parts of the school, including a modern library and computer room. Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided which are all accessible from sleeping accommodation and provide privacy. Many boarders have personalised their sleeping areas. Boarding accommodation is suitably designated for use by boarders and protected from access by unauthorised persons. The school operates a sophisticated surveillance system using CCTV and provides appropriate oversight of important access and entry points. Maintenance of boarding accommodation is given high priority. (NMS 5)
- 3.6 All boarders are provided with meals which are nutritious and the medical centre advises on specific dietary and medical requirements. Some boarders stated that there was insufficient choice of food, particularly at weekends. This viewpoint was also reinforced through questionnaire responses. Inspectors judged that menus provided a suitable range and choice of food and that catering staff were trying to introduce more variety, including at weekends. Celebrations and events where meals had followed a particular theme had been well received. The school is seeking ways to introduce more choice and to respond to the constructive points raised by boarders. Kitchen areas and provision are good and serviced regularly. Boarders have access to snacks within their houses and examples were observed of

boarders preparing snacks for their peers. All water supplies to the school are suitable for consumption and are suitably labelled. (NMS 8)

- 3.7 Laundry provision is satisfactory and boarders' clothing is suitably stored for access when needed. Some older boarders indicated that they would like more washing facilities, an area of development already included in the school's plans. Boarders are able to obtain necessary personal and stationery items from the school shop, and the local store for other provisions. The school exercises effective monitoring and recording of boarders' personal possessions. House staff look after boarders' passports and pocket money is kept securely. Each girl has a lockable space either in their dormitories or nearby. (NMS 9)
- 3.8 Boarders have a wide choice of activities to undertake outside teaching time, including free time each day. Some boarders considered that activities at weekends were sometimes repetitive but others provided examples of interesting and challenging events. Access to recreational areas throughout the school is good. There are quiet areas within the houses, libraries and chapel where boarders can go for peace and reflection. Programmes are monitored carefully to provide flexibility. Boarders have very good access to information about events in the wider world. Newspapers are delivered daily to the houses and the library provides newspapers, periodicals and popular food and fashion magazines. Boarders can also use television and the internet, subject to appropriate controls. (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 comprehensive arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of boarders. Risk assessments are routinely undertaken within the school and for outside trips and events. First aid, school security and other related matters, such as mini-bus use, are given high priority and supported by clear policies and procedures. In responses to the pupil questionnaire the significant majority of pupils stated that they felt safe in the school. The school demonstrates full regard to national guidance on all health and safety matters and this is reviewed by school governors. (NMS 6)
- 3.11 Rigorous procedures ensure that fire precautions are in place and are regularly tested. Fire records are maintained well, including equipment testing, and all aspects are in good order. Fire drills are held at least every term and in boarding time and boarders and staff are fully acquainted with procedures. Logs of fire drills are well maintained. (NMS 7)
- 3.12 The school is active in promoting the welfare of boarders and staff are well trained in current safeguarding requirements. The policy is up to date and meets all the requirements of national guidance. All new staff receive induction training on safeguarding and welfare matters which is regularly updated. The full board of governors provides good oversight of safeguarding, staff vetting and recruitment and other welfare issues and has appointed one of its number to oversee welfare and pastoral matters. The school has appointed designated persons for safeguarding and welfare who are trained at the appropriate level and maintain good links with local children's services. Staff have good awareness of the need to promote the welfare of all pupils and share information on any emerging concerns relating to individual boarders. Boarding staff maintain good relationships with boarders and

this was reflected in meetings with boarders and through questionnaire feedback. (NMS 11)

- 3.13 The school has established clear policies on the promotion of positive behaviours and relationships. Discussions between staff and boarders occur regularly and boarders have indicated that they get on well together in houses. Measures are in place to combat bullying and boarders confirmed that this was not a major concern and if it does occur it is taken seriously by staff. Boarders are fully aware of matters of discipline and sanctions and find rules and expectations are clear. They also think that sanctions are fairly applied. (NMS 12)
- 3.14 Staff recruitment and vetting processes are robust, with rigorous checks and recording, and fully meet national guidance and regulatory requirements. The central register of staff appointments is well maintained and up to date. Governors maintain close oversight of recruitment and vetting processes within the school including personal attention to the central register by the chair of governors. (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 has a clear statement of boarding principles and practice which is fully disseminated to all pupils and parents and which was seen to be carried out. Governors and senior leaders at the school provide strong support for the boarding experience and ensure that they have first-hand knowledge of relevant issues. Weekly meetings are held to discuss boarding development needs and there are clear lines of accountability and responsibility between senior leaders and boarding staff, ensuring that policies and procedures are effective. (NMS 1)
- 3.17 Boarding staff receive regular training, supervision and support and demonstrate considerable commitment to boarding and to continuous improvement. Boarding records are well maintained. (NMS 13)
- 3.18 The school ensures that all persons employed or volunteering at the school and working with boarders have job descriptions, receive appropriate training and regular reviews of practice. The role of others within boarding houses is also explicit. The level of staff supervision of boarders outside teaching time is good with appropriate attention given to particular needs and the types of activities being followed. Boarders are supported and supervised effectively at all times. Procedures are in place to respond to boarders who go missing, including liaison with local police. Night-time staff cover is effective and boarders have suitable means to contact staff at night. Access by boarders to staff accommodation is carefully managed. (NMS 15)
- 3.19 An equal opportunities policy is applied to ensure that the individual needs of boarders are fully considered. Boarders reported that they are treated with respect by staff and peers and most parents reported through their questionnaire that their children are treated as individuals. (NMS 16)
- 3.20 Boarders have many opportunities to contribute views on the operation of boarding provision and are able to raise concerns with boarding staff in whom they stated they have considerable confidence. The school council meets on a regular basis and suggestion boxes are made available in some parts of the school. (NMS 17)

- 3.21 The school follows a clear policy for dealing with representations and complaints. The policy is fully up to date and ensures that any complaints are dealt with at the appropriate levels. No complaints have proceeded to the higher levels in recent times as the school takes prompt steps to resolve matters at the informal stage. The majority of parents have stated that the school handles well any concerns raised. (NMS 18)
- 3.22 Prefects have job descriptions which are appropriately reviewed. Prefects are suitably monitored by staff to ensure that they operate within the guidelines provided. (NMS 19)
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for boarders. (NMS 20)