



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**SLINDON COLLEGE**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Slindon College

Full Name of School	<b>Slindon College</b>
DfE Number	<b>938/6094</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1028125</b>
Address	<b>Slindon College Top Road Slindon Arundel West Sussex BN18 0RH</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01243 814320</b>
Fax Number	<b>01243 814702</b>
Email Address	<b>headmasterspa@slindoncollege.co.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Ian Graham</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Michael Emerson</b>
Age Range	<b>8 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>88</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys</b>
Numbers by Age	5-11: <b>4</b> 11-18: <b>84</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>49</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>39</b> Full: <b>15</b> Weekly: <b>24</b>
Inspection dates	<b>01 Oct 2013 to 03 Oct 2013</b>

## 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 December 2009 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited the boarding house 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 Colette Culligan

Mr Tim Dewes

Reporting Inspector

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

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Slindon College is a non-denominational day and boarding school for boys aged from 8 to 18. Originally founded as Lindfield School, its name was changed in 1972 and the school has occupied its present rural site close to Arundel since 1956. The school is a registered charity, overseen by a board of governors whose members meet each term in full committee. Separate governors' committees also meet termly.
- 1.2 The school specialises in providing for boys who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and sets out to provide the individual attention and support which will enable them to enjoy their education. It also aims: to encourage all pupils to believe in themselves; to inspire them to fulfil their potential; to provide them with the skills they need to succeed; and to ensure that no pupils leave the school feeling that they had not been understood. It intends that its boarding provision enables a 24-hour curriculum within which boarders can develop self-confidence, independence, the capacity to interact with adults and peers, self-discipline and a sense of direction. All boarding accommodation is within the main building of the school, with separate sections for junior and senior boarders. Most pupils come from the south east of England, and a few are from overseas. There are five pupils for whom English is an additional language and who receive support.
- 1.3 Currently there are 88 pupils enrolled at the school, of whom 39 are boarders. Eight pupils are in the sixth form. The majority of pupils have been formally diagnosed with conditions covering a range of needs, including concentration difficulties. Such conditions include attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism and Asperger's syndrome. All, including those also diagnosed as dyslexic, receive special support within the school. There are 39 pupils with a statement of special educational needs, of whom 33 are funded by their local authority.
- 1.4 Since the previous boarding welfare inspection, undertaken by Ofsted in December 2009, the school has extended its curriculum with the introduction of practical courses including motor mechanics and horticulture. Some boarding accommodation has been refurbished.
- 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 does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, and therefore it must:

- ensure that a written record is kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing [National Minimum Standard 18].

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that the newly established procedures for recording safeguarding concerns are fully understood and rigorously implemented by all staff.
2. Ensure that all boarding staff are given formal opportunities to review their boarding practice with a senior colleague.
3. Extend the refurbishment programme to all boarding accommodation as resources allow.

### **(iii) Progress since the previous inspection**

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection made four recommendations for improvement, including: specific training for staff in the medical bay; arrangements and records for fire drills; safe recruitment for staff; and arrangements for those living on the school site but not as employees. The school has improved its health and safety measures and its procedures for safer recruitment. Training for the Safe Handling of Medicines Course was completed by Matron, Houseparents and two Joint Heads of Boarding.

### **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 Each boarder receives a suitable handbook on arrival. The specific needs of pupils transferring from other schools are suitably assessed, drawing on the appropriate information received prior to their arrival. Staff help new boarders to understand the handbook and the layout of the school. Boarders are assigned a prefect mentor. Boarders confirm that they quickly make friends with those who have been boarding for longer and have a choice of staff with whom they feel comfortable to discuss concerns. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents commented positively on how swiftly their children settle into the school and on the understanding of their needs shown by the staff. Contact details are displayed for an independent listener and appropriate outside helplines. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has, and implements, suitable policies for the care of boarders. Appropriate separate accommodation is provided for any who are sick or injured. The medical centre is open throughout the day, and enhanced first-aid qualifications complement staff experience to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support in the context of their various and complex needs. No pupil is allowed to self-medicate. Household remedies and prescribed medicines are securely stored; the latter are dispensed to the correct pupil as prescribed. Other staff who are suitably trained serve in this capacity in the absence of the school matron. Communication between the matron and house staff is regular. Appointments are made as necessary with local medical services. Boarders' rights and confidentiality are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are free to contact their families by email and mobile telephone, and through the internet. House telephones are available if required. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The boarding house is clean, warm and comfortable, with suitable sleeping arrangements. Accommodation ranges from single rooms to dormitories for three pupils. Although some bunk beds are used, space in rooms is sufficient and boarders are satisfied with the provision. There are plans for gradual refurbishment and updating of the rooms and furnishings. Washroom and toilet facilities have been recently upgraded. Younger boarders study in classrooms and senior boarders have desks in their rooms. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their rooms. Dormitories have locks and the boarding house accommodation is secure from unauthorised access. Security measures do not intrude on pupils' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 A choice of plentiful nutritious, appetising food is provided, including salad and fresh fruit, catering for religious, cultural and other dietary needs. Drinking water is readily available. Evening snacks and drinks are provided in the house. All kitchens are suitably equipped and clean. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of boarders reported dissatisfaction with the provision of food. In their review of menus, attendance at meals and conversations with pupils, inspectors found such complaints to be unjustified. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Suitable laundry provision is made and items returned the same day to pupils in individual baskets. Boarders can purchase sundry toiletry and stationery items from school stock. Bedrooms have individual safes, although pupils report that they do not always use these. The school looks after any valuables and distributes pocket money as required. [NMS 9]



- 3.8 A range of suitable activities is provided during free time. Weekend activities include trips to local amenities including shops, bowling and the cinema. Extensive school grounds provide opportunities for relaxation and exercise. Television and use of the internet facilitate boarders' awareness of events in the world. [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 produced a suitable written health and safety policy with advice from outside consultants, in response to the recommendations made previously. The policy and procedures are reviewed appropriately. Risk assessments are undertaken as required for activities both within and beyond the school site. School accommodation and facilities are maintained in a safe condition, ensuring as far as is practical the health, safety and well-being of pupils. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 All required procedures to reduce the risk of fire are in place. Fire practices are carried out regularly, including in the evening, and logs of fire drills are suitably maintained. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils meets requirements. All staff and governors receive appropriate training at suitable intervals. Until very recently, records of concerns about individual boarders had not been kept appropriately or with sufficient thoroughness to enable suitable consideration of potential problems. A safe, secure and effective system has been established so that requirements are now met. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school has a suitable written policy to promote good behaviour and to counter bullying, which is understood by pupils and staff. Staff draw on their knowledge of individuals when dealing with misdemeanours, so that each pupil is helped to learn from his mistakes rather than simply being disciplined. The school focuses on positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour, with a system of credits and rewards appreciated by the pupils. Boarders commented that, although they may occasionally argue, bullying is rare and is dealt with swiftly by the school. The school is flexible in making practical arrangements that ensure boarders are happy with dormitory allocations. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school has improved its recording of staff recruitment procedures since the last Ofsted inspection and its arrangements now meet requirements. All people over the age of 16 living on site who are neither pupils nor employees have been the subject of suitable checks. An appropriate written agreement is made between the school and adult non-employees who live in the same premises as boarders. All visitors and maintenance personnel visiting boarding accommodation are supervised to prevent unauthorised access to boarders or their accommodation. The school does not appoint guardians but supplies parents with the names of guardian agencies on request. [NMS 14]

### **3.(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision**

- 3.15 The school does not meet one of the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 The school publishes clear statements of its boarding principles. The flexibility the school demonstrates in meeting the many complex needs of its pupils and the relationships engendered within the house are evidence that these principles work in practice. [NMS1]
- 3.17 Leadership and management of boarding are clear. Governors show understanding of the needs of boarding but their monitoring of the accuracy and implementation of some policies has lacked rigour. Improvements were made during the inspection to achieve the necessary regulatory compliance. Members of the boarding staff team work together effectively and they meet regularly to discuss the boarders' needs. Boarding staff attend the morning briefings and teaching staff undertake weekend duties in the house, ensuring good links between the academic and pastoral sides of school life. Senior boarding staff are experienced and all staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and first aid. Several have undertaken further training in boarding matters. When pupils join the school, they are carefully assessed, and handover material is consulted. These records and those required by the National Minimum Standards are maintained and suitably monitored by the senior staff. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All boarding staff have job descriptions and receive an induction handbook. They talk informally with each other on a regular basis but there are limited opportunities for them to review their boarding practice with a more senior colleague. Spouses living in boarding accommodation have no responsibilities within the boarding house. Sufficient numbers of experienced and trained staff are on duty at all times to meet boarders' needs, and an identified and qualified staff member is responsible for the boarders. Procedures are designed to ensure that staff always know the whereabouts of all boarders. The missing child policy is clear; staff use their knowledge of each individual when initiating a search and know when to seek further guidance from the head or the police. Staff have suitable accommodation within the boarding house and there is always at least one staff member, easily contactable by the boarders, sleeping in the house overnight. Access to staff accommodation is appropriately managed to combine support with maintaining boundaries. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 The school has strong policies, effectively implemented by all staff to protect boarders from any form of discrimination and to promote tolerance. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Boarders' views are elicited by several means and the school is seen to give careful consideration to these, for example in the activities provided. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school's policy on responding to complaints is appropriate and most complaints are dealt with at an informal level. The policy has not been thoroughly implemented, however, in that not all written complaints and the stage at which they were resolved have been recorded as required. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Prefects undertake a number of duties to help staff in the smooth running of the house. They do not have the authority to impose sanctions but they do report inappropriate behaviour to staff. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not use long-term lodgings. [NMS 20]