



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

STAMFORD HIGH SCHOOL

BOARDING WELFARE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Stamford High School

The junior school and boys' school were inspected at the same time and separate reports published.

Full Name of School	Stamford High School		
DfE Number	925/6028		
Registered Charity Number	527618		
Address	Stamford High School St Martin's Stamford Lincolnshire PE9 2LL		
Telephone Number	01780 484200		
Fax Number	01780 484201		
Email Address	headshs@ses.lincs.sch.uk		
Head	Mrs Yvonne Powell		
Chair of Governors	Mr Malcolm Desforges		
Age Range	11 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	628		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 0
	3-5 (EYFS):	0	11-18: 628
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	566	
Number of Boarders	Total:	62	
	Full:	35	Weekly: 27
Inspection dates	05 Nov 2013 to 07 Nov 2013		

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.

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 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

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Mrs Colette Culligan

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Sarah Williamson

Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Stamford High School, a day and boarding school catering for girls from aged 11 to 18, is one of the three schools which constitute the Stamford Endowed Schools (SES). It was founded in 1877 and occupies its original site close to the centre of Stamford in Lincolnshire. Stamford School for boys aged 11 to 18 and the co-educational Stamford Junior School are close by. The schools are overseen by a common governing body, members of which work closely with the overall principal and with the heads of each school.
- 1.2 The Stamford Endowed Schools aim to provide a happy, exciting and supportive environment in which pupils are inspired to achieve of their best, develop intellectual curiosity and have a caring, respectful attitude to others. The aims of boarding support these aspirations. The houses intend to create as far as possible the best values of family life, encouraging an atmosphere of tolerance, kindness, self awareness and self discipline. The school intends that this ethos will enable boarders to develop both personal independence and the ability to work as part of a team.
- 1.3 There are 628 pupil in total at Stamford High School of whom 62 are boarders. The two boarding houses provide full, weekly, three-night or flexi-boarding. Welland House is for boarders aged 11 to 16; a small number of Year 7 boarders have been accommodated in the short term in St Michael's House, a boarding house for the junior school. They are due to join the remainder of the High School boarders in Welland House in January. Sixth form boarders live in Park House. Both houses are within a few minutes' walk of the main school buildings. Boarders come predominantly from the UK, with some from Europe and the Far East.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, a new housemistress has been appointed for Welland and a system of academic mentors for boarders in Years 9 to 13 has been introduced.
- 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) Recommendation for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that each house undertakes an annual self review against the NMS to support current practice.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in December 2009. It judged the school's boarding provision to be outstanding and made no recommendations.

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 receive written handbooks. New boarders in Year 7 are linked with an existing pupil and overseas pupils are supported by a designated prefect. Each pupil's induction is directly overseen by staff. Boarders identified a range of staff to whom they can turn for help and know how to access outside sources of support, including the independent listener. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Suitable policies for the care of boarders who are unwell are in place, overseen by the qualified nurses and implemented correctly both in the medical room and in the houses. Systems for the storage and the dispensing of prescribed medicine and household remedies are in place and monitored appropriately. Boarders deemed competent to do so administer their own medicine. The medical room is open during the day and a suitably separated and supervised sick bay is located in Welland House for use by all boarders. The school doctor visits regularly. Boarders have access to other specialist services as necessary. Their right to confidentiality is appropriately respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are able to contact their families and friends using mobile and pay telephones. An Internet connection is provided and boarders may use their mobile devices subject to guidance for appropriate and safe use. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Sleeping accommodation in both houses is appropriate. Boarders in Welland enjoy sharing rooms. Sixth form boarders have a single or shared room. Suitably private toilet and washing facilities are located throughout the houses. Boarding accommodation is clean, well-maintained, warm and well-ventilated. Boarders personalize their rooms, creating a homely atmosphere. There are comfortable areas for boarders to relax or study; younger boarders do supervised prep in the library. Access to accommodation is controlled and security measures do not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 During discussions, all boarders said the food is appetizing. Hot and cold choices with healthy options are available at each meal. Drinking water is available throughout the day. Special dietary needs are catered for as needed. All kitchens used by the boarders are kept clean and tidy. The circular tables in the dining room encourage a family atmosphere. A range of snacks and drinks is provided for boarders in house kitchens. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Boarders' bedding and clothing is laundered weekly and returned to the correct boarder. There are facilities in both houses for boarders to wash small items. Although lockers have been provided, boarders in Welland prefer to have the houseparents store their valuable items while sixth form boarders have individual safes. Boarders are able to obtain necessary stationery and personal items from local shops or the houseparents' emergency supplies. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders enjoy the programme of evening and weekend activities, in some of which they join with the other SES schools. The houses and attached gardens provide safe, pleasant areas for relaxation. Access to television, internet, newspapers and appropriate local facilities enable boarders to be aware of world events. [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's written policy on health and safety meets statutory requirements. Advice is taken from specialist consultants and suggestions are implemented across the site. The school premises, facilities and accommodation are maintained so as to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pupils as far as is practicable. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school has acted upon all the recommendations of a fire risk assessment of the boarding houses, so that all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risks presented by fire. Alarms and extinguishers are tested weekly. Boarding houses ensure that fire drills are carried out twice each term, one during boarding time, and these practices are recorded as required. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school continues to ensure that its arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders meet all statutory requirements and are properly implemented. Liaison with the four local authorities from which pupils are drawn is established as needed. The designated senior persons and all staff are trained at the appropriate levels and at the required intervals. Governors have also attended safeguarding training. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school's written policy is consistently implemented to promote good behaviour. There are suitable policies on the use of restraint and of searching although the school has not needed to apply these. Sanctions, which are rarely required, are recorded centrally and also on house files. Boarders understand and respect the rules. They told inspectors that bullying does not happen and that, should disagreements arise, they are resolved by staff providing impartial support as needed. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school operates safe recruitment procedures and all staff at the High School have been subject to the required checks before taking up their posts. Individuals over the age of 16 living in the boarding houses who are not employees have been checked as required and have written agreements specifying the terms of their accommodation. Visitors to the boarding houses are supervised to guard against unsupervised access to the boarders. The school requires parents who live overseas to provide guardians for their daughters and gives clear guidance on the expectations of these 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 A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice reflecting the school's aims is made available to parents, pupils and staff. The atmosphere in the houses and the relationships evident between the boarders and staff, and between the boarders themselves, demonstrate that these work in practice. Those parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were virtually unanimous in their satisfaction with the school. [NMS1]
- 3.17 Leadership and management of boarding practice are clear, with experienced and trained senior staff. Weekly meetings between all those responsible for boarding ensure regular communication and discussion of boarding issues. Development of boarding is incorporated into the overall school development plan although houses do not conduct specific self-review against the NMS. Governors visit the boarding

houses annually. All housemistresses teach in the school. Links between the academic and pastoral aspects of boarders' lives are further supported by a system of non-residential boarding academic tutors for boarders in Years 9 to 13. All required records are maintained and monitored by the appropriate member of staff. [NMS 13]

- 3.18 Training is provided for all new boarding staff. Staff have regular reviews of their boarding practice and are encouraged to undertake further training. Spouses living within the boarding houses do not have specific boarding responsibilities. Boarders are always appropriately supervised and under the care of identified and experienced staff members. There are staff sleeping in appropriately separate accommodation in the house each night, easily contactable by boarders. Boarders have no inappropriate access to staff accommodation. There are systems to ensure that staff always know the whereabouts of boarders and staff are confident in implementing procedures should a boarder go missing. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders say that they are treated fairly and equally, experiencing no inappropriate discrimination on any grounds. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 The school has and implements a suitable policy for dealing with complaints. [NMS 18]
- 3.21 The pupil heads of house view their role primarily as providing support for other boarders and of the school. They take responsibility for organising social activities, including weekly opportunities for girls to get to know others in different year groups. They do not have specific responsibilities for managing daily routines within the houses. [NMS 19]
- 3.22 The school does not use long term lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20]