



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

STANBOROUGH SECONDARY SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Stanborough Secondary School

Full Name of School	Stanborough Secondary School
DfE Number	919/6154
Registered Charity Number	1044071
Address	Stanborough Secondary School Stanborough Park Watford Hertfordshire WD25 9JT
Telephone Number	01923 673268
Fax Number	01923 893943
Email Address	registrar@spsch.org
Head	Mrs Lorraine Dixon
Chair of Governors	Pastor Ian Sweeney
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	108
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (63 boys; 45 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 78
Number of Boarders	Total: 30
	Full: 19 Weekly: 11
Inspection dates	19 Mar 2013 to 21 Mar 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 January 2007 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 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 Colette Culligan

Mr Paul Johnstone

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding
(Former Head of Department, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Stanborough Secondary School, a co-educational day and boarding school founded in 1919, is located in a parkland site in Garston, Hertfordshire. Its current complex, including the boarding accommodation, was completed in 1991. The school is owned by The British Union Conference (BUC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is run in accordance with that church's principles. Governors are appointed either by the BUC, or ex officio, or are elected by staff or parents.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a strong moral and spiritual Christian framework within which to develop the pupils' full potential, with positive attitudes to challenge and learning. It sets out to foster the characteristics of good citizenship, tolerance and understanding of those of other cultures, and a willingness to serve the school and wider communities. It intends that boarders can grow in awareness of others' needs, and develop all aspects of their own characters and the personal motivation to approach their work professionally.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection there have been significant staffing changes, including the appointment of an interim head in 2012 and of a new head of boarding in 2011. Assistants in the boarding house are volunteers and change annually.
- 1.4 There are 108 pupils enrolled at the school, of whom 30 are boarders. Boarders come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including some from countries in south east Asia and Africa. Four boarders are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and nine have English as an additional language (EAL). Specialist support is provided by the school according to need.
- 1.5 There are 19 full boarders and 11 who board on a weekly basis. All boarders are accommodated in a single boarding house. Pupils at Stanborough International School, which is not included in this inspection, share some school facilities, including the boarding accommodation.
- 1.6 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 2011.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement.

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Improve and monitor the effectiveness and consistency of the induction process for boarders.
2. Ensure more rigorous monitoring of the understanding of assistant staff of their daily responsibilities and the effectiveness with which these are discharged.
3. Improve training for boarding staff, including volunteers.
4. Ensure consistency and clarity in school documentation, including handbooks and materials on the school website.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in January 2007. In response to the findings of that inspection, the process of refurbishment and redecoration of the boarding house has begun, and the school has improved its procedures for appointing and checking the suitability of staff.

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 Appropriate induction is provided for boarders but it is not always consistent. There is a useful boarding handbook although this is not sent to boarders in advance, which results in some uncertainties on arrival. While some boarders feel that they were warmly welcomed into the school, others feel that initial support was limited, although adequate. In discussion, boarders named several members of staff to whom they would turn for help and they are given details of appropriate outside sources of support, including an individual independent of the school. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Provision for the care of sick pupils is adequate. Training has been booked for house assistants in order to increase the number of trained first-aiders in the house. There are suitable rooms to accommodate boarders who need to be treated in isolation. Those who feel unwell stay in their rooms and are checked on regularly. The majority of boarders feel that they are well looked after if unwell. All are registered with a local medical practice, and appointments are made with doctors, opticians or dentists as necessary. Prescribed medicines are stored and administered appropriately. The school has appropriate measures to assess the boarders' ability to self-medicate although guidance to boarders in this area is limited in scope. The boarders' confidentiality and rights are respected. [NMS3]
- 3.4 Boarders can contact their parents with appropriate ease. They may use mobile telephones, the internet or the landlines available in the house as necessary. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Sleeping accommodation is separated by gender. Communal rooms provide for social gatherings. There is limited provision for study within the rooms but boarders may also work in designated classrooms. Each bedroom has en suite facilities. All are appropriately lit and ventilated. A programme for the refurbishment of boarding accommodation has begun which addresses the requirements of the previous inspection. Any boarder with mobility difficulties can be accommodated on the ground floor. Boarders help to keep the house clean. Furnishings are suitable, though a number of rooms have bunk beds, or beds set close together. Although the boarders did not express concern, this limits individual space. The school is taking steps to improve the situation. Bedding is clean and warm. There is suitable separation from any adult accommodation. Boarders may personalise their rooms. The boarding house is for the exclusive use of boarders and there are procedures to ensure no unauthorised access. Measures to keep boarders safe do not intrude on their privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 The school's menus provide for the various needs of its pupils. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire almost all boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the food, although in discussion they said it is improving. The range of choices is appropriate, if limited, and the food of suitable quality. Fresh water, fruit and salads are available. The kitchen is adequately hygienic. Although the school does not supply provisions outside mealtimes, boarders may buy and prepare their own food in the house in the evening. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 The school launders bedding weekly. Boarders are largely responsible for their personal laundry. They are able to obtain necessary personal and stationery items during the term. Valuables are stored by the school and boarders have lockable storage for their own use. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 There is a limited range of activities outside teaching time. Boarders said that they are satisfied with the provision, but that they would like more trips at weekends. The attractive grounds provide safe recreational areas and there are quiet indoor spaces in which to be alone. Newspapers, televisions and the internet provide access to information about the outside world. Boarders may visit local facilities at appropriate times. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 Suitable policies with regard to the boarders' health and safety are in place and implemented. The premises and accommodation are maintained so as to ensure that the health and safety of boarders is reasonably protected. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 All necessary measures to prevent the risk of fire are in place. Equipment is checked as required, fire procedure signage is in place throughout and fire drills are carried out at least termly, including during boarding time. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school's updated safeguarding policy now meets requirements. At present there is no member of the boarding staff with higher level training in child protection. This results in some lack of clarity in documentation as to whom house staff and boarders should consult about safeguarding issues. Suitably senior members of staff are trained in child protection matters and provide appropriate oversight in this area in practice. The school is taking measures to ensure that information in all handbooks and on the website is consistent. The governors monitor the safeguarding policy annually. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Handbooks contain written policies to promote good behaviour, in line with the school's ethos. Disciplinary sanctions are respected by boarders, although the majority, in response to questionnaires, said that they feel these are applied inconsistently and that good behaviour is not correspondingly acknowledged. Inspectors agreed with this view. A minority said in questionnaire responses that the school does not handle bullying issues well. In discussions, some boarders said that there are very few instances of bullying, while others said that they resolve matters amongst themselves successfully rather than turning to the school for help. Boarders agree that on the whole they get on well and inspectors judged that the atmosphere in the house supported this view. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school has improved its procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers since the previous inspection. All governors, staff and non-employees living on site have now been checked appropriately, and these checks are now correctly recorded. There is a suitable written agreement with adult non-employees living on site, stipulating the terms of their accommodation. Procedures are in place to ensure that visitors to the house are prevented from unsupervised access and the school continues to strengthen these. The school is not responsible for guardianship arrangements. [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 and implements a suitable statement of boarding principles and practice for its boarders. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Senior managers have appropriate experience in working with young people. Assistant staff are less experienced and rely on the guidance of managers, which is suitable overall. Pupils value and trust the leadership of senior staff. The evident commitment of boarding staff to boarders is paralleled by that of academic colleagues, with whom there are appropriate links. The required records are maintained. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Boarding staff have job descriptions and suitable induction on arrival, but are not always confident in the detailed understanding of the responsibilities and implementation of their roles. The school is currently instituting an additional boarding management role to provide greater continuity of care for boarders and improved monitoring of good boarding practice. Boarders are always in the charge of a named member of staff. Sign-out procedures ensure that the whereabouts of boarders is known. Staff understand the policy concerning missing pupils. All duty staff sleep in the house overnight and are readily contactable by boarders. The boarders' occasional access to staff accommodation is supervised appropriately. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders feel well cared for and treated fairly. No discrimination of any kind is evident. Boarders say that cultural understanding is enhanced by the presence of international pupils who stay on a short-term basis. Boarding staff are sensitive to the specific needs of individual pupils and provide appropriate support. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In response to the questionnaire, a majority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the school's response to their views and suggestions. Inspectors found that the school welcomes the boarders' views and suggestions. This is evident in minutes of recent discussions concerning school food and in the introduction of such social activities as a Valentine's Day banquet. Boarders are comfortable in approaching the head of boarding about any matter. They are not penalised for raising concerns or complaining in good faith. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school's updated complaints procedure is available on its website and is appropriately followed. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 For boarders who hold positions of authority within the house, roles include informal guidance in behavioural and spiritual matters. Those designated as 'house brother' or 'house sister' join an advisory committee that makes recommendations to the head of boarding about disciplinary issues. All boarders with such responsibilities are appropriately supervised and may not impose sanctions. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not use long-term lodgings. [NMS20]