



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

STANBOROUGH SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Stanborough Secondary School

Full Name of School/College	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	Mr Roger Murphy		
Chair of Governors	Pastor Ian Sweeney		
Age Range	11 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	105		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (52 boys; 53 girls)		
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 87	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	50
Number of Boarders	Total: 18		
	Full: 13	Weekly: 5	
Inspection dates	29 Nov 2011 to 30 Nov 2011		

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in February, 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced in January 2007 by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will 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.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Stanborough Secondary School is a day and boarding school operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, to provide a Christian education for its boys and girls. It aims to provide a strong spiritual and moral foundation, to realise each pupil's academic potential, to develop pupils' social and cultural growth, to enable pupils to achieve optimum physical vitality and health and to inculcate the characteristics of a good citizen. It also seeks to ensure that the teaching environment is inclusive by meeting the specific needs of all pupils and by encouraging activities to develop multi-cultural awareness. The school is an incorporated organisation owned by the registered charity the British Union Conference (BUC) of the Seventh-day Adventists. It has a governing body of thirteen full members, and four ex officio; the majority of governors are not members of the BUC.
- 1.2 The school dates from 1940 and the current complex, including boarding accommodation was completed in 1991. It is situated in 40 acres of parkland in Garston, Hertfordshire, and attracts pupils locally from considerable distances, as well as from many other counties. On the same site, but registered separately and not part of this inspection, is Stanborough International School, whose pupils are registered each morning with the main school and who join in various parts of Stanborough Secondary School curriculum, although they do not transfer fully to the secondary school until they have sufficient fluency in English.
- 1.3 The school has 105 pupils on roll, of whom 52 are boys and 53 are girls. Between the ages of 11 and 16 there are 93 pupils and in Years 12 and 13 there are 12 pupils. Boarders number 18, of whom 5 are weekly boarders.
- 1.4 Nationally standardised baseline tests show that pupils are of average ability on entry to the school. Four pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), seven have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. Among the pupils there is considerable social, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, although nearly half the pupils come from a Seventh-day Adventist background.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 The quality of pupils' achievements, overall, is satisfactory, and pupils are educated in accordance with the school's aim to develop the whole person. Pupils are generally confident and articulate, able to think logically, to grasp mathematical and scientific concepts and to work efficiently with computers. Some of them gain places at their first choice university. The extra-curricular programme is satisfactory, providing a range of activities for the pupils during the week, though there is little evidence of variety at the weekends. Many of the activities are 'clinics' to support the academic curriculum, but there was little evidence of extra curricular academic achievement. Recently pupils have performed well in basketball, reaching the finals of the county championships and they also progressed to the national championships in the Independent Schools Association athletics.
- 2.2 The following analysis used data from 2008 to 2010, the most recent three years for which comparative data are available. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools, thereby demonstrating good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. One-third of pupils gained A* and A grades. Results at IB have been below the average for schools worldwide, though they have shown improvement in each of the last three years. There being no baseline testing in Year 12, judgement on progress in relation to national averages cannot be made. However, inspection evidence indicates that pupils make appropriate progress for their ability showing improvement in recent years. Pupils with special SEND or EAL were observed to make progress in line with other pupils of similar ability. Pupils display good attitudes towards learning. They are attentive in lessons and persevere with tasks set. Given the opportunity they will participate actively in discussion and debate, though in some lessons observed there was a lack of urgency in their approach to work. They are polite, co-operative and display respect for their teachers.
- 2.3 The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced. There was little evidence of cross-curricular use of ICT either during lessons or in the pupils' work, reflecting the weakness indicated in the previous inspection report. Pupils, however, acknowledged that they did sometimes use computers in lessons other than ICT. Subject choices at GCSE are somewhat limited by small group sizes.
- 2.4 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In many of the lessons observed, the pace was slow and the more able pupils were not sufficiently challenged. Teachers are knowledgeable, but the weakest lessons lacked evidence of good planning. There was little variety of tasks and low expectations of the pupils. Better lessons were purposeful and well-planned, with good pace and work that challenged the pupils. Some good marking was seen which is diagnostic, clear and encouraging, though marking is generally sporadic, lacking constructive comments or targets for improvement. SEND pupils and those with EAL are supported effectively, both through classroom support and through extra-curricular 'clinics'. This enables them to achieve as well as their peers in relation to their ability. The more able pupils are less well catered for and on many occasions tasks set lack challenge and rigour.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.5 The personal development of the pupils is good. They are self-confident, articulate and friendly. They value the ethos of the school and its sense of community. Their spiritual awareness is successfully developed through the Christian ethos of the school, reinforced through daily worship. They are courteous and respectful both to their teachers and to each other. They have a good sense of right and wrong, and the attitudes and values provided by the school are highly regarded by the parents. The pupils are able to accept their social responsibilities, both formally as school prefects and in other roles within their form, such as class president, secretary or pastor. They do not officially look after younger pupils, but acknowledge their responsibility to support each other on a daily basis. There is a rich cultural mix within the school and there are opportunities to share their diversity during events such as International Night, when the various groups dress in cultural costumes and share national food, songs and customs. Pupils said they derived great benefit from the cultural mix they experienced.
- 2.6 The pastoral care of the pupils is good, maintaining the standard of the previous report, and in line with the school's aim to educate the whole child. Pupils enjoy constructive relationships with the staff, characterised by mutual respect. They say that there is always someone to speak to, and felt that bullying, a rare event, was quickly and efficiently dealt with. They said they felt at home, and safe. Some pupils felt that they had little opportunity for their opinions to be heard, but inspectors found that a mechanism existed, through the student association, for their views to be acknowledged. School lunches were also criticised, as being unattractive and the same each week, although inspectors noted many pupils receiving large helpings which they appeared to eat with gusto.
- 2.7 Current arrangements for the safety and welfare of pupils are good. Anti-bullying and safeguarding arrangements are secure and the staff receive the appropriate training in child protection. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken and risk assessments and first aid policies are in place. The school has an appropriate medical room in the boarding house, and adequate provision for pupils who are ill. The school has a designated child protection officer, but his two year advanced training has lapsed, and arrangements have been made to renew this training in January 2012. The school's central register of appointments, designed to demonstrate a safe recruitment system, has not been correctly kept in the past, with the effect that it is no longer clear whether all staff had CRB clearance at the time they took up their appointments. Volunteer staff from abroad have not routinely had CRB clearance at the time they took up their appointments. All current staff have received this clearance.
- 2.8 Pupils who board said that they enjoyed it. They felt the boarding house was a home from home, and that it helped them to learn how to become independent and to get on well with people from a range of different cultures. Boarding staff clearly know their charges well, and the children appreciate the support they give.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management.

- 2.9 Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors meet at least five times a year, with further meetings for the finance committee. They receive a head's report at each meeting, but do not have any other mechanism to assist them in providing effective oversight of the work of the school. However, they are considering a restructuring of governance to enable governors to fulfil their monitoring role more successfully. The governors understand their responsibility for child protection, and have nominated a governor to monitor this area, but some checks and records on staff have not been properly recorded in the past, and governors have not undertaken annual reviews of the child protection policies together with a review of the effectiveness of their implementation. So far no links have been established between the child protection governor and the school's child protection designated officer.
- 2.10 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leadership team meets frequently. Some senior staff are perceptive in their self-evaluation and planning, being well aware of both the school's strengths and of areas for further development. However, since all senior staff take on a considerable range of responsibilities, they have less time for organised innovation. The effect of this on both parents and pupils, mentioned in comments on questionnaires and in interviews with pupils, is that although staff may respond quickly to pupil or parent concerns, any subsequent action to bring about a resolution is likely to be slow in coming. The previous report recommended that middle management be more fully involved in management issues. So far some progress has been made, although still leaving the senior leadership heavily burdened, while middle management is not yet fully engaged in the monitoring of teaching and learning in each department. This results in teaching and target setting being of variable quality.
- 2.11 Premises and grounds are well maintained, are of good quality and enhance the educational experience of the pupils. Maintenance staff keep comprehensive records of the work they do to protect the health and safety of pupils and staff, and are quick to respond to all maintenance requests.
- 2.12 All required information is provided to parents and prospective parents, strengthened by the recent inclusion of policies on the website. The small number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were pleased with the pupils' standards of behaviour, with the attitudes and values of the school and with the provision for boarders. They were less happy with the information they receive about their children's progress, the range of extra curricular activities provided and the time taken to respond to parental concerns. Inspectors broadly agreed with all these views, although reports to parents contained many constructive comments. The grade point average on reports lacked any explanation for parents.
- 2.13 The school has an appropriate complaints policy.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

3.1 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore must:

- ensure the designated person has appropriate training and that the governors review safeguarding policies annually [Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety];
- ensure that all staff receive appropriate UK checks on appointment including those from overseas [Part 4, paragraph 19 (2) (c); 19 (3), under Suitability of Staff];
- maintain the single central register of appointments correctly [Part 4, paragraph 22(4), under Suitability of Staff].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

3.2 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Develop governance procedures to monitor the school's activities and to provide challenge to the staff.
2. Strengthen the role of middle management in monitoring teaching and learning to improve consistency of classroom practice.
3. Ensure that work is marked more consistently and that specific advice is given on targets for improvement.
4. Ensure that lessons always challenge and stimulate more able pupils.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jenny McCallum

Sister Paula Thomas

Reporting Inspector

Headmistress, GSA school.