



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Marlborough House School
DfE Number	886/6005
Registered Charity Number	307793
Address	Marlborough House School High Street Hawkhurst Cranbrook Kent TN18 4PY
Telephone Number	01580 753555
Fax Number	01580 754281
Email Address	frontoffice@marlboroughhouseschool.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr David Hopkins
Chair of Governors	Mr John Hawkins
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	318
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (168 boys; 150 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 48 5-13: 270
Provision for flexi-boarding	Yes
Number of Boarders	Total: 71 Full: 0 Weekly Flexi: 71
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Kate Nash
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	31 January to 2 February 2012

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing primarily on compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. 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. 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 October, 2008, 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, 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.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with boarders, held discussions with senior members of staff and with a governors' representative, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities in the evening that occurred during the inspection period, and attended morning chapel. Inspectors visited each of the boarding house dormitories 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 James Bowden

Mr Benedict Dunhill

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Headmaster, IAPS school)

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Marlborough House School, a non-selective and co-educational school, was founded in 1874 and moved to its present site in its own grounds on the outskirts of Hawkhurst, Kent, in 1930. The school is a charitable trust administered by a Board of Governors. The school's aims are to provide a safe, healthy and caring environment for children to live and grow in; to maintain a happy community based on mutual respect and consideration; to encourage children to strive for excellence in everything they do; to discover and develop the gifts within every child; to recognise and meet individual needs; and to prepare children for the future stages of their education.
- 1.2 There are 318 pupils on roll (168 boys and 150 girls). Pupils largely come from families with a business, professional or farming background and live within a radius of fifteen miles. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds. The school operates a flexi-boarding system for up to 45 pupils per night aged eight and over. Pupils choose to board for one night at a time and can choose from three nights of the week, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Boarding begins once activities have finished and day pupils have gone home. The boarders are cared for in one house by a house master, two matrons, an assistant matron and two gap year students who also support the teaching staff during the day.
- 1.3 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) Recommendation for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

1. Broaden the range of healthy snacks available in the evening.

(iii) Progress since the last inspection

2.3 All eight recommendations made at the last Ofsted boarding inspection in October, 2008, have been fully addressed. These included issues relating to boarders' health and well-being, boarding accommodation, safety of boarders, fire precautions and drills, promoting positive behaviour and relationships, staff recruitment and checks on other adults, and complaints.

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 Pupils choosing to opt for flexi-boarding are provided with information beforehand as well as the opportunity for a 'taster' night. Boarding staff provide a friendly welcome and appropriate support for the boarders' induction. Each boarder is confident in choosing a member of the boarding staff to whom she or he can turn for guidance or for help with a personal problem. Boarders are made aware of one person outside the boarding and teaching staff of the school whom they may contact directly. In addition, a list of specialist organisations is also provided. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has made significant progress since the previous Ofsted boarding inspection in provision for boarders' health and well-being. Although pupils who are unwell are usually collected by parents/carers before night time, arrangements for sick or injured pupils at night ensure they are cared for in dedicated and appropriate sick rooms. Suitably experienced and trained boarding staff administer medicines when needed. Medicines dispensed are recorded and securely stored in their packaging, including refrigerated storage where appropriate. Medical records, kept in the matron's office, ensure confidentiality. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders can contact their parents and carers, when and if the need arises, using private access to a pay phone or the telephone in the housemaster for boarding's office. Boarders are not allowed to bring in mobile phones or other technological communication aids. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation is clean and maintained well; dormitories are individually themed, which is much appreciated by both boys and girls. In line with the recommendation at the previous Ofsted boarding inspection, there has been an increase in the number of toilets and washbasins provided, as well as the introduction of separated showers. Pupils are afforded appropriate privacy. Discreet use of surveillance equipment at night adds to their safety. Boarding accommodation is reserved for those designated to use it, including access to the school's library and other specialist accommodation as required during the activities programme. There is no unsupervised access to boarders, or to boarding accommodation whilst occupied by pupils. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Indicative of the clean and hygienic preparation of food are awards for hygiene and for healthy eating from the local council. Where possible, the catering manager ensures all food is sourced locally. Pupils appreciate the quality and range of food provided, particularly breakfast choices. Any special dietary needs are met. Pupils can access snacks and drinks appropriately in addition to the main evening meal. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry arrangements are appropriate. Clean bed linen is provided daily. Boarders bring their own duvets, which helps personalise the dormitories. Personal and stationery items can be obtained when needed. Secure provision is provided for any valuables or personal possessions brought in by pupils. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 An extensive range of activities is available during the evenings in which all may become involved. Boarders freely select which to participate in and they spoke highly of the opportunities provided for both boys and girls, including single gender

as well as mixed activities. Activities include physical, creative and academic opportunities. During the inspection, on a particularly clear and crisp night, boarders relished the one-off opportunity to use the school's telescope to look at the moon's craters and the rings of Saturn. [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 procedures and protocols ensure that boarders are safe, secure and protected from harm throughout the nights they opt to board. The school has clear risk assessments for all aspects of safety. These are reviewed regularly to ensure there are no further concerns. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school meets all requirements in relation to fire safety and has addressed the particular issues recommended by the previous Ofsted boarding inspection. Pupils and staff are fully aware of procedures for both day and night as a result of clear information provided and regular evacuation drills carried out throughout the year, including at night time. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Child protection procedures are robust, well understood and implemented. The designated person has ensured all staff are up to date with recent and relevant legislation and has secure links with the local authority designated officer who has also provided training on site. Detailed documentation enables staff to be made aware of issues, should they arise, and the housemaster for boarding is currently undertaking advanced training in child protection. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Good behaviour amongst pupils and effective relationships with boarding staff are promoted by the ethos of the boarding provision and the expectations of staff. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and monitored regularly, whereby any concentrations or trends can be identified and acted upon. Underpinning this are the school's policies to promote good behavior and prevent bullying, which are available to boarders and their parents. In discussion groups with the inspectors, boarders reported that they are in a safe environment where bullying is not an issue they encounter. Boarders' behaviour and attitudes underpin the social and emotional character they display. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Recruitment of staff meets requirements and relevant policies are implemented. The single central record of appointments is up to date, checked and maintained. In line with the recommendation of the previous Ofsted boarding inspection all required details are included. All visitors are supervised during their time on site so that they do not have unauthorised access to the boarding accommodation or unsupervised contact with boarders. [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's aims for flexi-boarding provision are available to all prospective parents and pupils. The principles, ethos and aims of this provision are reflected in the personal development of boarders, particularly in developing their independence and preparing them for full-time boarding should they opt to take this route in the next stage of their education. [NMS 1]

- 3.17 The headmaster has overall responsibility for boarding. The housemaster for boarding joins senior leadership meetings where boarding matters and issues related to individual boarders are discussed. Development of the quality of boarding education is integrated into the school's three-year development plan. This is also monitored for the governing body by a governor with responsibility for boarding. All relevant records are maintained and monitored regularly. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Job descriptions detail full roles and responsibilities for all boarding staff. These reflect the roles carried out by their holders. All staff are suitably experienced and appropriately trained. Induction for new staff is implemented. Regular appraisal is conducted and on-going training opportunities are given to staff. Boarders can contact staff during the night should they have a problem. Supervision of boarders is appropriate and staff know their whereabouts. The school has a written policy for missing pupils but this has not been needed to date. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 In discussions, boarders reported that they are treated equally and there is no inappropriate discrimination. Whole school policies are clear in this respect and activities for boarders are open to all. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Boarders report they have sufficient opportunities to share their views and suggestions, both formally and informally, with boarding staff. This includes their use of the 'sensible suggestions or worries box' in the boarding area. Boarders feel they are listened to by the boarding staff. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 A clear complaints procedure, including time lines and protocols is available to all parents. This aspect of the NMS now fulfills the previous recommendation. All complaints are dealt with in line with the school's protocols and none of the very few initiated has had to reach the final stage of the procedure. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 There are no boarding prefects; Year 8 pupils are expected to lead and support others by example. [NMS 19, not applicable]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20, not applicable]

