



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BISHOP'S STORTFORD COLLEGE SENIOR SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Bishop's Stortford College Senior School

The junior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	Bishop's Stortford College Senior School					
DfE Number	919/6007					
Registered Charity Number	311057					
Address	Bishop's Stortford College Senior School 10 Maze Green Road Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire CM23 2PJ					
Telephone Number	01279 838575					
Fax Number	01279 836570					
Email Address	general.enquiry@bishopsstortfordcollege.org					
Headmaster	Mr Jeremy Gladwin					
Chairman of Governors	Dr Philip Hargrave					
Age Range	13 to 18					
Total Number of Pupils	566					
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (314 boys; 252 girls)					
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	405				
Number of Boarders	Total:	161				
	Full:	67	Weekly	21	Flexi:	73
Inspection dates	24 Apr 2013 to 26 Apr 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 February 2010 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 chairman of governors, 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

Mr Adrian Underwood

Mr Neil Hampton

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Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding
(Deputy Head, HMC school)

Team Inspector for Boarding
(Assistant Head, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

- 1.1 Bishop's Stortford College was founded in 1868. Originally a small boys' school, it is now a co-educational day and boarding school of 1129 pupils aged from 4 to 18. The school became fully co-educational in 1996. The school is also a charitable trust and the governors are the charity's trustees.
- 1.2 The school aims for education to be an exciting, uplifting and liberating experience, a process that unlocks a world of opportunity and gives pupils a lifelong appetite for knowledge and understanding, a curiosity about the world and a delight in it. It sets out to balance the pursuit of academic excellence with wholehearted participation in sport, music, art and drama, so that pupils become fulfilled, creative, self-confident and caring young men and women, ready to contribute positively to society and play a full part in it.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, the college senior school totalled 566 pupils, 314 boys and 252 girls, of whom 161 were boarders. The sixth form comprised 230 pupils: 120 boys and 110 girls. There were 45 pupils who speak English as an additional language and 40 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The majority of boarders are of white British heritage, and others come from 11 other countries.
- 1.4 Full and weekly boarders are members of one of three boarding houses, two for boys and one for girls. A small separate girls' flexi-boarding facility is attached to one of the girls' day houses. The school offers a full boarding programme as well as weekly and flexible boarding options. Each house is led by a housemaster or a housemistress, supported by a resident tutor and a team of visiting tutors. The head of boarding is one of the deputy heads and is a member of the senior management team.
- 1.5 Since the previous boarding welfare inspection, a new art department has been built, three science laboratories have been refurbished, the first phase of the extension of the dining hall kitchens has been completed and boarding house refurbishment has continued. There has been a change of headmaster, the present incumbent having taken up his appointment in September 2011.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Fourth Form	Year 9
Lower Fifth	Year 10
Upper Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

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. Ensure that formal meetings of all the boarding staff in each house are held at regular intervals.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in 2010. The recommendation of that inspection regarding the quality of evening meals has been successfully addressed.

3. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

3.(a) Boarding provision and care

- 3.1 The school meets all the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 New boarders receive appropriate induction guidance through bespoke house induction packs and support from senior boarders. Boarding staff and academic tutors work closely together to support boarders' development, and communicate informally every day and through the management information system (MIS). Boarders can talk with the independent listener, the school counsellor and the chaplain. Confidential helplines are published in the Pupil Diary and the houses. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for boarders who are ill. The medical centre's facilities are appropriate for first-aid treatment and for illness, including separate facilities for girls and boys. Medical staff are appropriately qualified and work with a local medical practice in managing and storing prescribed medication correctly. Boarders have access to other medical services as required. A small number of boarders are judged sufficiently responsible to self-medicate. Confidentiality is assured, and boarders' rights are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders contact their families by telephone and using internet facilities, and boarding staff are supportive regarding time differences for boarders from overseas. Boarders understand the need for the school to monitor internet communications in the interests of safeguarding. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents were very satisfied with the boarding provision. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The four houses differ in design, but the boarding accommodation is appropriate for the numbers and ages of the boarders. The programme of refurbishment supports improvement across the houses. Boarders are able to personalise their study bedrooms, where they do homework, but they also have access to specialist facilities for private study. Social areas are used for relaxing, playing games and watching television. The house security systems ensure that only those who are authorised can access the houses. The CCTV system supports boarders' security but does not impinge on their privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Boarders eat in a central dining-room with hygienic facilities. In response to the questionnaire a small minority of boarders indicated dissatisfaction with the food on offer. Inspection evidence did not support this view. In discussion, boarders were positive in their comments on the provision of food. Inspectors found that meals are healthy, nutritious and offer a range of choice, including a salad bar. Boarders contribute to menus through the food committee and the international committee. In the houses, boarders have access to drinking water at all times and have toast, fruit and other snacks at breaks and in the evenings. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Discrete laundry facilities for each house support appropriate laundering of boarders' clothing and bedding. Boarders' bedrooms all have locks and, in addition, boarders have lockable storage. Pocket money for younger boarders is managed by the house teams and the proximity to Bishop's Stortford enables boarders to obtain stationery and other personal items. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders enjoy a wide range of activities, including sport, music, drama and outdoor pursuits. Boarders confirm their enjoyment of all activities available and, during the inspection, this was observed in drama and art sessions. Most boarders go home overnight on Saturday, but, for those remaining, weekend activities, such as paint-

balling and visits to theme parks, are appreciated. Boarders enjoy a spacious campus where they can associate with friends or choose to be alone. Boarders are aware of national and world events from use of the internet and newspapers. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The school ensures the safety of boarders. It has appropriate risk assessments, and safety records are regularly monitored by the health and safety committee. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The fire safety policy and practice effectively guard against risk from fire. Drills are held in boarding time and recorded correctly. The testing of boarders' portable appliances is carried out regularly by appropriately qualified staff. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The safeguarding policy and procedures are in accordance with official guidance, and the school has suitable links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The designated person is booked on a local authority course to update her child protection training. Staff child protection training is up to date and is appropriately logged. Staff are aware of and implement safeguarding procedures. Child protection documentation is appropriately recorded and securely stored. A comprehensive safeguarding report is made annually to the governing body, which reviews both policy and practice. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The policy to promote good behaviour is suitable and gives equal weight to rewards and sanctions, illustrated by tracking measures on the MIS. Boarders report that they appreciate the relaxed atmosphere in the houses but are aware of the sanctions for poor behaviour. Boarders equally report that bullying is not tolerated and the very few instances of bullying are effectively managed. The policies on room searches and physical restraint are suitable. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Staff recruitment policies and checks, and the central register meet requirements. People over the age of sixteen living on site who are not members of staff have comprehensive written agreements, are suitably checked and receive appropriate induction guidance. All visitors are monitored and no-one has unsupervised access to boarders. The school does not appoint guardians. [NMS 14]

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

- 3.15 The school meets all the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 The school's boarding principles and practice are published in the Pupil Diary and they work in practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The school development plan, the boarding reviews and the improvements in boarding since the previous inspection confirm the commitment of governors and senior managers to enhancing pupils' boarding experience. By means of the boarding practice handbook the head of boarding has developed uniformity of practice across the houses, whilst respecting the individuality of house cultures. Records, boarding policies and documents are regularly monitored by senior management. Senior staff are very experienced in boarding practice and regularly attend professional development courses on boarding. Such experience contributes to the management of boarding, as exemplified by the annual review of a boarding self-assessment document. Meetings of boarding staff in each house, however, are not a regular occurrence. Boarders' academic and personal development is tracked and parents receive progress information once a term. All parent contact is made

- electronically, thus serving the particular needs of parents based overseas. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 The number of staff employed in the houses at all times is appropriate. All boarding staff have suitable job descriptions; the roles of members of boarding staff households are clearly stated. Boarding staff have suitable induction training. Appraisal of boarding staff has recently entered a new and appropriate cycle to allow discrete evaluation of boarding responsibilities. Staff supervision of boarders at all times is appropriate and boarders are clear about how to contact staff at night. Signing-out systems are correctly used. The regular registrations each day ensure that staff know boarders' whereabouts; staff also know the procedure in the case of a missing boarder. Staff accommodation is suitable, as are the protocols for access to that accommodation by boarders. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 The equal opportunities policy is effective in practice. Boarders report that they experience no discrimination, and that staff treat them fairly and are committed to the personal development of each individual. Those boarders with SEND, those who need help with their English and those who have particular pastoral needs have additional support. Boarders from other countries are fluent in English and expressed their pleasure at the integration of all nationalities at the school. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Boarders express their views formally through the boarders' committee, the international committee, the food committee and termly boarder questionnaires. In the houses, more informal discussion encourages community decisions about new facilities or house management. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The complaints procedure is published on the school's website and conforms to regulations. Complaints are appropriately responded to and recorded. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The houses operate a structure of head of house and monitors, which is separate from the school's prefect system. Heads of houses and monitors serve the houses in a variety of ways and are appropriately supervised by the boarding staff. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20]