



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ROYAL HOSPITAL SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Royal Hospital School

Full Name of School	<b>Royal Hospital School</b>
DfE Number	<b>935/6056</b>
Address	<b>Royal Hospital School Holbrook Ipswich Suffolk IP9 2RX</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01473 326200</b>
Fax Number	<b>01473 326213</b>
Email Address	<b>reception@royalhospitalschool.org</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Howard Blackett</b>
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Henry Strutt</b>
Age Range	<b>11 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>690</b>
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (400 boys; 290 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>169</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>521</b> Full: <b>521</b> Weekly: <b>0</b>
Inspection dates	<b>07 Feb 2012 to 09 Feb 2012</b>

## 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 March 2009 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 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**

Mr Timothy Holgate

Mrs Jean Gray

Mr Douglas Quinn

Mr Jeffrey Shipway

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding  
(Former Senior Teacher, HMC school)

Team Inspector for Boarding  
(Housemaster, ISA school)

Team Inspector for Boarding  
(Housemaster, HMC school)

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 The Royal Hospital School was founded in 1712 by Greenwich Hospital for the education of the sons of seafarers. It moved to its present 200-acre site at Holbrook, near Ipswich, in 1933. The first girls were admitted in 1991 and day pupils were accepted in 2006. Since the previous ISI inspection in 2010, the programme of refurbishment of the ten boarding houses has been completed. Two separate houses accommodate the youngest boarders in Years 7 and 8, and one house contains boys and girls in Year 13. The other seven single-sex houses accommodate boarders from Year 9 to Year 12. The school has a strong naval heritage; pupils participate in a number of naval ceremonial occasions throughout the year and all have the opportunity to learn to sail. The school is part of the Crown charity Greenwich Hospital and the headmaster is directly responsible to its director. The school's governance is mainly devolved to its own governing body and the headmaster is also responsible to the chairman of governors.
- 1.2 The school has clear aspirations for its boarding pupils. It seeks: to develop respect and tolerance for other people and the ideal of service both within the school and to the community at large; to enable pupils to develop a sense of their own identity and value; and to promote the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to adult life. In order to prepare pupils to be responsible citizens when they leave school, it aims to provide a civilised, caring, Christian community, based upon reasonable behaviour, mutual respect, value, trust and courtesy between staff and pupils. The school sets out to place importance on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils in terms of their health, happiness, and physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral, spiritual and behavioural development. It aims to emphasise and encourage personal responsibility so that pupils learn how to conduct themselves as individuals and as part of a team.
- 1.3 The school has 690 pupils on roll: 400 boys and 290 girls. Of these, 521 are full boarders, and 216 are in the sixth form. Most pupils are recruited from the UK, with about one in seven boarders from overseas, mainly China, Germany and Eastern Europe. Altogether, 30 nationalities are represented within the boarding community. Of the 99 pupils who have English as an additional language, 55 receive specialist support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 102 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who may require general support for learning difficulties, and 29 pupils receive specialist support. Nearly 300 pupils are in receipt of financial support for armed services families or seafarer bursaries from Greenwich Hospital.
- 1.4 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 does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, and therefore it must:
- require its contract catering company to confirm receipt of satisfactory references for its employees before they start work at the school [National Minimum Standard 14.1., under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults].

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that sanctions for minor misdemeanours, including those issued by prefects, are consistently applied and recorded. [NMS12]
  2. Ensure that full and accurate records of child protection training for non-teaching and support staff are maintained. [NMS 11]

### **(iii) Progress since the last inspection**

- 2.3 The school has made good progress since the previous Ofsted boarding welfare inspection in 2009 in addressing almost all of the recommendations made. Efficient protocols are in place for the provision and administration of medication. All outstanding recruitment checks on staff have been carried out, but not all properly recorded. Staff are aware of safeguarding procedures and have received appropriate training and guidance. Outcomes of house meetings are recorded. Deficiencies in bathroom provision have been remedied.

### **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 New boarders benefit from a full induction weekend when they join the school. This enables them to become familiar with their houses and new school routines. This is supplemented by informative house booklets and the pupils' handbook. Pupils report that there are many adults they can approach with confidence, particularly their matrons, if they need to discuss a concern. Appropriate contact details for an independent listener and various helplines are clearly published. [NMS2]
- 3.3 A suitable range of effective medical and health care policies and protocols supports the provision of a comprehensive medical and dental service for boarders, both in suitable premises and, where necessary, off site. Medication is stored safely and appropriate safeguards for its administration are in place. The health centre is staffed around the clock by experienced and qualified nurses. Boarders' right to confidentiality in medical matters is appropriately respected. [NMS3]
- 3.4 A comprehensive and wide-ranging programme of refurbishment of boarding house accommodation has ensured that boarders benefit from comfortable, clean, spacious and well-furnished accommodation. Boarders greatly appreciate the provision of studying areas, common rooms, recreational facilities, computer rooms and kitchen areas in their houses. [NMS5]
- 3.5 Boarders are highly complimentary about the quality of food available, and meals provide suitable quality, quantity and variety, appropriate to different dietary needs. Meals are prepared and served hygienically, and boarders feel that mealtimes are enjoyable social occasions. Milk, bread and fruit are provided in houses, and boarders of all ages are able to prepare their own drinks and snacks. [NMS8]
- 3.6 The laundry service for boarders' clothes is quick and efficient. Boarders are able to lock their wardrobes and tuck boxes for safe storage of their possessions and valuables. Boarders can purchase items of stationery and toiletries in school, or through the matrons. Older boarders are permitted to visit the local shops at certain times. [NMS9]
- 3.7 The school's extensive activities programme enables boarders to develop their talents and interests in a wide range of areas. They enjoy the many house activities, competitions and events in the evenings and weekends, when the spacious school campus and its facilities are available to them. Provision of newspapers, magazines and television enable them to keep in touch with the world outside school. [NMS10]

### **3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding**

- 3.8 The school does not meet all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.9 Boarders' health and safety are given a high priority within the school. Effective policies to minimise risks to health and well-being are regularly reviewed and well implemented. Thorough risk assessments for all areas of the school and the boarding houses, as well as off-site trips, are appropriately drawn up and monitored. The school has due regard to relevant government guidance. [NMS6]
- 3.10 Procedures to reduce risk from fire are regularly checked, and efficiently and comprehensively documented. An audit carried out by an external agency has enabled the school to improve its fire precautions. Boarding houses carry out regular fire drills and practise evacuation procedures at different times of the day and evening. [NMS7]
- 3.11 A strong awareness of the importance of safeguarding welfare and child protection is evident amongst boarding staff. The school's policy and procedures contain all the items required by official guidance, and a designated governor reviews the effectiveness of the school's practice regularly. Appropriate child protection guidance and training are carried out for all teaching and non-teaching staff, although records of training carried out for non-teaching staff have not always been recorded with sufficient clarity or accuracy. [NMS11]
- 3.12 Detailed and effective policies to promote good behaviour are underpinned by a clear system of rewards and sanctions. They include arrangements for searching pupils' possessions and for countering bullying and anti-social behaviour. Boarders say that on the rare occasions when such behaviour occurs it is appropriately dealt with. The policies comply with relevant legislation and are known and understood by staff and boarders. Sanctions used by staff and prefects for minor misdemeanours are sometimes inconsistently used in different houses, and are not always recorded efficiently. [NMS 12]
- 3.13 Governors, volunteers and staff employed by the school have undergone the full range of required pre-appointment checks, including those through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), in line with relevant official guidance. These checks have been correctly recorded in the school's single central register of appointments. The school has carried out checks through the CRB and other checks on contract catering staff, but the catering agency has not confirmed satisfactory receipt of character references obtained on its employees before they start work on site. The school has carried out appropriate checks on and issued written agreements to members of staff's families over 16 years of age living in residential accommodation. Appropriate supervision and safeguards are in place when visitors enter boarding accommodation. The school does not appoint guardians or arrange accommodation with host families. [NMS14]

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

- 3.14 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.

- 3.15 A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles is posted on its website and displayed on boarding house notice boards, thereby enabling boarders and their parents to understand the boarding practice and organisation within the school. [NMS1]
- 3.16 Boarding staff at all levels show a clear commitment to enhance the quality of the boarding experience. The headmaster, senior managers and governors take a prominent role in supporting the boarding staff. Regular meetings enable discussion of day-to-day organisation as well as longer-term strategic planning. House tutor teams ensure effective monitoring of boarders' academic and pastoral progress. Welfare records are regularly monitored by senior staff. Boarding staff teams provide a valuable blend of experience and expertise. [NMS13]
- 3.17 Boarding staff professional development is promoted strongly. All such staff have detailed job descriptions, and undergo a thorough process of induction and guidance into the running of the houses. They receive regular informal reviews and formal appraisal of their performance, and benefit from many opportunities to undertake internal and external training on pastoral and boarding related topics. Each house benefits from the presence of three resident members of staff who provide effective supervision and overnight care. Boarders are clear about who is responsible for them and are easily able to contact staff by day or night. Regular roll calls and house meetings enable staff to monitor boarders' presence in the house, and an appropriate policy is in place to search for any missing pupils. [NMS15]
- 3.18 The school and the boarding houses embrace a wide range of circumstances and backgrounds amongst the boarders, who report that the school community is inclusive, tolerant and supportive. Staff are sensitive to the wide range of personal and pastoral needs of the boarders. Those from the 30 nationalities represented are well integrated into the boarding community. [NMS16]
- 3.19 Boarders have many opportunities to contribute their views on the running of the boarding houses and on issues that affect their welfare and care. Suggestion boxes, house and school councils, the food committee and daily house meetings encourage boarders to voice their opinions in a constructive way. Boarders also feel able to approach house staff with suggestions, and are confident that they will be listened to. [NMS17]
- 3.20 The school's complaints procedure for parents meets relevant regulatory standards, and the school works hard to resolve such concerns and records all details efficiently. Boarders have a well-understood procedure for raising concerns and worries, and can identify a wide range of trusted adults in the school who they would feel able to approach. [NMS18]
- 3.21 The house and school prefect systems are well established within the school, and are a key part of day-to-day operations. Prefects are well regarded by junior and senior boarders, and are effectively supported and guided by staff, after receiving appropriate training. Prefects understand the responsibility they have for the welfare and well-being of other members of the house and school. [NMS19]

3.22 The school does not arrange lodgings for any of its boarders. [NMS20]