



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**FARLINGTON SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Farlington School

Full Name of School	<b>Farlington School</b>			
DfE Number	<b>938/6144</b>			
Registered Charity Number	<b>307048</b>			
Address	<b>Farlington School</b> <b>Strood Park</b> <b>Horsham</b> <b>West Sussex</b> <b>RH12 3PN</b>			
Telephone Number	<b>01403 254967</b>			
Fax Number	<b>01403 272258</b>			
Email Address	<b>office@farlingtonschool.net</b>			
Headmistress	<b>Ms Louise Higson</b>			
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Susan Mitchell</b>			
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>			
Total Number of Pupils	<b>331</b>			
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>			
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11:	<b>106</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>28</b>	11-18:	<b>197</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>294</b>		
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>37</b>		
	Full:	<b>31</b>	Weekly:	<b>5</b>
			Flexi:	<b>1</b>
Inspection dates	<b>11 Feb 2014 to 13 Feb 2014</b>			

## 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 November 2011 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 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**

Mrs Colette Culligan

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Diana Rose

Team Inspector for Boarding (Head, HMC School)

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

- 1.1 Farlington School is a day and boarding school for pupils aged 3 to 18; boys are welcomed into the nursery but the remainder of the school is for girls only. The school was founded in 1896 in Haywards Heath but moved to its present site on the 33-acre estate of Strood Park in 1956. The boarding house is located within the main school building. The school is a registered charity of which the governors are trustees.
- 1.2 The school states as its prime aim the intention to educate for confidence. It aims for all its girls to become confident individuals, able to face challenges and to have an awareness of responsibilities to self, to others and to the environment. It aims to establish a family atmosphere within its small boarding community and to ensure that all its pupils are known as individuals. It intends that neither mediocrity nor anonymity are seen as acceptable.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in senior leadership. The present headmistress and housemistress were appointed in 2012.
- 1.4 There are currently 331 pupils enrolled at the school. The school identifies 48 pupils as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and two pupils have statements of educational need. There are 197 girls in the senior school, 163 day pupils and 34 boarders. Most of the latter are full boarders although a small number board weekly and one for a few nights each week. The majority of day pupils come from within a 20-mile radius of the school and from white British professional families. The 26 overseas boarders come primarily from Hong Kong, China or Spain. There are 29 girls who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school provides specialist help for the majority of such pupils, the remainder being catered for within the normal classroom.

- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) 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 equivalence are shown in the following tables.

***Preparatory Department***

School	NC name
Nursery	EYFS Nursery
Reception	EYFS Reception
Prep 1	Year 1
Prep 2	Year 2
Prep 3	Year 3
Prep 4	Year 4
Prep 5	Year 5
Prep 6	Year 6

***Senior School.***

School	NC name
Year 7	Year 7
Year 8	Year 8
Year 9	Year 9
Year 10	Year 10
Year 11	Year 11
Year 12	Year 12
Year 13	Year 13

## **2. SUMMARY**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

2.1 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

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

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Strengthen procedures for ensuring that house staff have a clear picture of boarders' academic progress and how to support this.
2. Extend the extra-curricular programme to provide a greater variety of options for boarders.

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

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in November 2010. It recommended that improvements should be made to the procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and in the provision for privacy in some bathing arrangements. The school has successfully dealt with both of these matters.

### **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 Boarders are given a handbook prior to arrival. An induction checklist ensures that each new boarder is familiar with house procedures. All boarders named several members of staff to whom they would go for help or advice. They spoke warmly of the support provided by the head boarders when settling in. Contact details of appropriate sources of outside help, including the counsellor and the children's rights director are displayed. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Appropriate policies provide guidance for first aid, dealing with chronic conditions, administering household remedies and medical emergencies. Accommodation to cater for boarders who are sick or injured is suitable. Boarders too unwell for lessons stay in their rooms and are checked on by staff or nurses throughout the day. The medical centre is staffed by qualified nurses who liaise closely with boarding staff to ensure continuity of care. Nurses organise appointments for other medical services as necessary. Prescription medicines are correctly stored and dispensed. Before boarders are allowed to self medicate their capacity to do so is properly assessed. Appropriate care is taken to respect the confidentiality and rights of boarders. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders may easily contact their parents by telephone, email or internet communication. The school has appropriate systems in place to ensure safe use of the internet. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarders' sleeping accommodation is suitable. A common room provides recreational space and all bedrooms have desks. Washing and toilet facilities are appropriately private, the concern noted in the previous report having been remedied. Rooms are well maintained, suitably furnished, warm and ventilated. Bedding is warm and the boarders' own duvet covers, soft toys and personalised pin boards create a homely environment. Care is taken to ensure that unauthorised persons do not access the boarding accommodation and security measures do not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 The school provides nutritious and appetising food, although the range of choice at lunch time is greater than that for boarders' supper. Specific dietary or religious needs are met. A minority of pupils said in the pre-inspection questionnaire that the food is not good. Inspection evidence, including conversation with pupils, meals sampled and menus seen, does not support this. All kitchens are clean and well maintained. Drinking water is readily available and boarders may prepare snacks in the evening in house kitchenettes. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Younger boarders' laundry is collected daily, laundered and returned promptly. Sixth-form boarders do their own personal laundry. Bedding is laundered regularly. Weekly trips to a local supermarket allow boarders to obtain necessary personal items. Boarders have lockable space for personal items. Valuables and large amounts of money are stored by the school. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders are content with the weekend activities offered. A few boarders said that although there are several extra-curricular activities, the range is limited. Inspectors agreed, the majority being for sports or music. Boarders have sufficient free time

and ample safe recreational spaces. Television and internet provide news about the wider world and boarders have appropriate access to local facilities. [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 has written policies complying with health and safety legislation. These are implemented appropriately, ensuring that the school premises, accommodation and facilities protect the well being and safety of all pupils as far as it practicable. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school has suitable fire safety procedures. Termly fire drills ensure that all pupils know the procedures during lesson times. In addition, there are two practices each term held in boarding time. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school now has a suitable safeguarding policy, displayed on the website and available to parents on request. Senior members of staff, trained to the appropriate level and at the required intervals, implement the policy correctly as required. All members of staff are trained on joining the school and at the required intervals thereafter. Records are securely stored. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school's written policy to promote good behaviour and counter bullying is understood by girls and staff. Boarders respect the rules and recognise that any sanctions imposed are fair. The success of the policy is evident in the rarity with which serious sanctions are required. The school has suitable policies for searching pupils' possessions and for restraint. In conversation with inspectors, boarders said that bullying is rare and that the school takes effective measures to counter any unpleasant behaviour. A minority of pupil responses to the questionnaire indicated that boarders do not get on well together, but in conversations pupils spoke appreciatively of the family feel of the house and the friendliness of their fellow boarders. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school now fully understands the requirements of safe recruitment procedures and records now meet expectations, as recommended by the previous inspection. All persons over the age of sixteen living in boarding accommodation are subject to the required checks. There are signed agreements specifying the terms of their accommodation and their responsibilities for supervising visitors. Visitors, including maintenance personnel, are sufficiently supervised to prevent any unauthorised access to boarders or their accommodation. The school does not appoint guardians but requires parents of overseas boarders to do so. [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 A statement of boarding principles and practice is available to parents and staff. Although different versions of this statement appear in documentation and on the website, practice in the boarding house meets its core principles consistently. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the school. Boarders say they are happy and feel part of one big family. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 There is clear leadership and management of boarding by an experienced, qualified team. Governors are committed to supporting boarding. Links between residential and academic staff are maintained through regular weekly meetings, variously involving senior staff, heads of year and the medical centre. House staff, however, are not kept fully apprised of steps teachers propose to support individual boarders' academic progress. Communication between house staff is effectively managed by meetings and written daily records. All required records are maintained and monitored and action taken as appropriate. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All boarding staff have job descriptions. They have suitable induction training and annual professional reviews. Training courses in developing boarding practice are made available, although staff have taken limited advantage of these. The role of spouses within the boarding house is made clear. There are at least two identified and qualified staff on duty daily and sleeping in appropriately separate house accommodation at night. They are easily contactable by boarders. Procedures for signing in and out of the boarding house ensure that staff know the whereabouts of boarders at all times. The school's policy for missing pupils is known to staff although they have not had to implement it. Any invitation to boarders to visit staff accommodation is properly supervised. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders confirm that the staff treat them equally, in accordance with the school's policies. Considerate behaviour, mutual trust and respect underpin relations between different age and cultural groups. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 A minority of boarders said that the school does not listen to or respond to their opinions. However, inspectors found that boarders can easily raise concerns or make complaints informally, either directly to staff or via the head boarders. The boarders' council, school council and food forum all represent boarders' views. The school's responses have included the creation of a fitness room. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school responds to any complaints in accordance with its published procedure, which meets regulatory standards. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Head boarders assist house staff in the smooth running of the house and are given appropriate training and supervision. Their job description requires them to act as role models and provide support for their juniors, leading by example. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings. [NMS 20]