



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CANFORD SCHOOL

BOARDING WELFARE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Canford School

Full Name of School	Canford School
DfE Number	836/6000
Registered Charity Number	306315
Address	Canford School Canford Magna Wimborne Dorset BH21 3AD
Telephone Number	01202 841254
Fax Number	01202 881009
Email Address	office@canford.com
Headmaster	Mr Benjamin Vessey
Chair of Governors	Mr Anthony Cottam
Age Range	13 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	640
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (376 boys; 264 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 211
Number of Boarders	Total: 429 Full: 429 Weekly: 0
Inspection Dates	1st Dec 2015 to 3rd Dec 2015

PREFACE

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) Regulations 2014, as amended. 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.

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 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' representatives, 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 Louise Belhiti	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Carl Bingham	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, ISA/Society of Heads school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Canford School occupies a 250-acre wooded estate on the edge of the River Stour, close to the town of Wimborne in Dorset. A boarding and day school for boys and girls aged 13 to 18, it was established in 1923 in Canford Manor, which traces its origins to Saxon times. The Norman church and the 14th century John o’Gaunt’s Kitchen, now a function room, are still in use by the school. The main school building, which is Grade I listed, was designed by Edward Blore and later Sir Charles Barry in the 19th century. The school is a registered charity, with governance provided by a board of trustees. In recent years the school has developed a number of new boarding houses.
- 1.2 The school aims to inspire all its pupils to embrace learning and to use their educational experience to make a positive difference to themselves and to the lives of others. Its principles are rooted in Christian values and it seeks to place particular emphasis on nurturing qualities that will enable pupils to become moral, tolerant and responsible individuals with good judgement and a sense of purpose. Its boarding life is based on the principle of creating a safe, healthy environment in which pupils can develop confidence and self-awareness while learning to live with and support others.
- 1.3 Currently, there are 640 pupils enrolled at the school. There are 429 boarders, of whom 28 speak English as an additional language. Most of these boarders are fluent in English and the school provides specialist support for five who require it. Boarders are mainly from families of British nationals, some of whom live overseas. A small number of boarders come from Russia or China. There are 97 pupils identified by the school as having mild special educational needs and/or disabilities. Of these, 26 receive specialist support within school.
- 1.4 There are seven boarding houses. Court, Montecute, Franklin and School house boys, and girls live in Beaufort, de Lacy or Marriotts. An annex accommodates a small number of sixth-form pupils, who remain members of their original houses for pastoral purposes. All houses are within the school grounds.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection a new headmaster has been appointed. There have been several changes to the senior leadership team, with a focus on developing pastoral care and the extra-curricular programme. The school has invested in the construction of new teaching spaces. The roles of graduate assistants in boarding have been reviewed. Facilities have been improved in several boarding houses.
- 1.6 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 NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Shells	Year 9
Fourths	Year 10
Fifths	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 2015.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that boarders receive clear feedback following meetings of the various committees that provide forums for the boarders' views to be considered.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was part of an integrated inspection undertaken by ISI in January 2012. No recommendations were made for the improvement of boarding.

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 value the school's induction programme and the provision of informative house handbooks. They can identify several members of staff, including the school's counsellor, to whom they would willingly go for help or advice in dealing with a personal concern. Contact details for further sources of support, including independent listeners and the Children's Commissioner, are displayed in houses. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Comprehensive policies, subject to regular review, ensure that the physical and mental health and emotional well-being of boarders are promoted. Policies cover first aid, administering homely remedies and dealing with chronic conditions or medical emergencies. The suitably equipped health centre, staffed by qualified nurses, makes separate provision for male and female boarders to stay overnight if necessary. The school doctor attends daily, and appointments are made with other medical and specialist services as required. Medication is appropriately stored and that which is prescribed is given only to the correct individual. Boarders who are deemed competent are able to self-medicate. An electronic system ensures that information between the health centre and houses about medications dispensed and any health concerns is shared appropriately. Boarders' rights and confidentiality are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders may contact their parents by telephone or email, or through other internet means of communication. Appropriate systems are in place to ensure safe use of the internet. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 All houses provide suitable sleeping accommodation, and any potential risks in the houses are identified and acted upon. There are suitable study and recreational spaces. Washing and toilet facilities afford appropriate privacy. Houses are well maintained and are suitably furnished, heated and ventilated. Bedding is clean and warm. Many boarders personalise their rooms, creating a homely atmosphere. Boarding accommodation is protected from access by unauthorised people, including members of the public using the school's facilities, and security measures do not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 In questionnaire responses a small minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the food and snacks provided. In conversations, however, boarders said that the food is good. Menus seen and meals sampled by inspectors provided further evidence that the food is appetising, nutritious and appropriate in choice and quantity. Specific dietary or religious needs are met. All kitchens, including those in houses, are hygienically maintained. Drinking water is readily available and boarders may prepare snacks at reasonable times. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Boarders comment positively on the speed and efficiency of the school's laundry provision. Senior boarders may also launder their own clothes. A school shop, a tuck shop and access to local towns allow boarders to obtain personal items easily. Boarders have lockable storage spaces, although some choose not to use them. Valuables are stored by the school. Any search of boarders' belongings is carried out in accordance with official guidance. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A minority of boarders said in questionnaire responses that they are not happy with the balance of free time and activities, although in interviews boarders spoke

appreciatively of the opportunities available and did not express discontent. Inspectors concluded that there is a suitable balance; all boarders are expected to be involved in some activities but they also have appropriate unstructured time. Suitable risk assessments are in place for activities and reviewed as necessary. Houses and the extensive grounds provide safe areas for recreation or for boarders to be alone. Daily newspapers, internet access and televisions provide boarders with information about the wider world, further enhanced by 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 suitable policies on health and safety. Maintenance of the premises and accommodation is such that the health, safety and welfare of boarders are protected as far as is practicable. Any potential risks are considered through a written risk assessment policy and actions taken as necessary. The implementation of health and safety procedures is monitored by senior staff and by a governors' education and safeguarding committee, so that boarders' well-being is actively promoted. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Policies and procedures to reduce the risk of fire meet requirements and are effective. There is a satisfactory programme for the checking of equipment and alarms. Evacuation drills, some at times when boarders are asleep, are carried out regularly, and their efficiency monitored. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders reflect the latest statutory guidance and procedures are suitably followed. All staff are trained at appropriate intervals and to the required levels. The school has established effective relationships with local children's services. Thorough records are maintained and stored securely, with information being shared appropriately so as to promote the welfare of boarders. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school's behavioural expectations and rules are understood by staff and boarders. A minority of boarders said in questionnaire responses that staff are unfair in giving rewards and sanctions. Inspection evidence did not support these views. Inspectors found that there is a consistent approach to giving rewards and to dealing with misdemeanours across the houses, and boarders said in discussions and in a very large majority of questionnaire responses that house staff treat them fairly. There are appropriate policies to guard against bullying, including cyber-bullying. In response to the questionnaire a few boarders indicated that they do not think the school handles bullying well. This view was not repeated in interviews during the inspection, boarders saying that bullying is unacceptable and dealt with firmly. The school's carefully maintained records showed that suitable action is taken, including involvement of outside agencies if appropriate. The school has and implements a clear policy on searching boarders and their possessions. It also has a policy, as required, on physical restraint. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Safe recruitment procedures are appropriately followed so that all the necessary checks are completed and recorded before an individual starts work at the school. Clear agreements set out the terms of accommodation for all adult non-employees resident in school; such individuals are also subject to the required checks. Any visitors to boarding accommodation are accompanied so that they do not have unsupervised access to boarders. The school does not appoint guardians for boarders from overseas but requires parents 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 clear statement of the school's boarding principles and practices is published on the school website and displayed on house notice boards. The school's atmosphere and the contentment of boarders show that these principles actively underpin the boarding life of the school. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Governors monitor the leadership and management of boarding and take appropriate action when necessary. A nominated governor visits the houses periodically. Responsibilities for boarding and welfare are consistently and effectively met by skilled and knowledgeable managers, so that the school actively promotes the well-being of boarders. Appropriate communication across departments and liaison between academic and residential staff regarding boarders' welfare are maintained. All senior boarding staff have suitable experience or training. The required documentation and records are correctly maintained and monitored. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All staff working with boarders have suitable job descriptions, induction training, formal reviews of boarding practice and opportunities for continual professional development in boarding. The spouses of resident staff do not have designated responsibilities. Sufficient numbers of experienced staff are on duty at all times so that boarders are appropriately supervised and their whereabouts known. Staff know what to do in the event that a boarder goes missing. There is always at least one staff member present overnight in each house and boarders can easily contact such staff in an emergency. Staff accommodation and facilities, to which boarders do not have inappropriate access, are suitable. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders confirm that they experience no discrimination or favouritism and that the school is sensitive to their different needs. New arrivals and boarders from overseas say that they integrate quickly. Mutual respect and tolerance are exhibited in the houses, in line with the school's ethos. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority of boarders said that the school does not ask for or listen to their opinions. This view was not reflected in interviews, and inspectors found that boarders are aware of a number of informal and formal mechanisms for expressing opinions, and that the school takes note of these, as seen in changes in menus. Boarders struggled, however, to point to specific outcomes from these opportunities for stating their views and making suggestions. Boarders are not penalised for raising a concern. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school deals with any complaints in accordance with its appropriate, published procedure. There have been no complaints relating to boarding provision. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 In each house some senior boarders act as prefects, under the supervision of boarding staff. Their roles, specific duties and responsibilities are clearly defined, with a focus on supporting and encouraging younger boarders and providing examples of leadership. Prefects may only dispense sanctions with the agreement of house staff. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20]