



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## St Paul's Cathedral School

Full Name of School	<b>St Paul's Cathedral School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>201/6006</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>312718</b>		
Address	<b>St Paul's Cathedral School</b> <b>2 New Change</b> <b>London</b> <b>London</b> <b>EC4M 9AD</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>020 7248 5156</b>		
Fax Number	<b>020 7329 6568</b>		
Email Address	<b>admissions@spcs.london.sch.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Neil Chippington</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>The Very Reverend Dr David Ison</b>		
Age Range	<b>4 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>252</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (150 boys; 102 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>21</b>	5-11: <b>186</b>
			11-13: <b>45</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>217</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>35</b>	
	Full:	<b>33</b>	
Inspection dates	<b>25 Mar 2014 to 27 Mar 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 December 2010 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 the vice-chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited the boarding house 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 Sara Wiggins

Reporting Inspector

Mr Rupert Blencowe

Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Boarding IAPS)

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

- 1.1 St Paul's Cathedral School is a co-educational day school for pupils from the age of four to thirteen with boarding provision for the cathedral's boy choristers from the age of seven. It traces its origins back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and existed for several centuries solely for the education of the cathedral choristers. It moved to its current location, close to the cathedral, in the 1960s and began to admit boys who were not choristers as pupils in the 1980s. The school has been fully co-educational since 2002. The school is owned by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral; its governing body comprises seven lay members and five Canons, chaired by the Dean. The provision of choristers, all of whom are boarders, to the cathedral remains the school's primary function. The school's pre-preparatory department opened in 1998.
- 1.2 The school aims, within a Christian community, to instil a love of learning through a broad curriculum, giving each pupil the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, personally, physically, culturally and spiritually. It seeks to encourage its pupils to achieve excellence and develop their independence and mutual responsibility. Within an atmosphere where the welfare of each child is of the utmost importance, the school encourages close partnerships with parents and aims to promote positive relationships, where the values of love, justice, tolerance, respect, honesty, service and trust are practised.
- 1.3 The school has on roll 252 pupils, comprising 150 boys and 102 girls. Twenty-one pupils attend the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), all full-time. In Years 1 and 2 there are 40 pupils and 191 pupils in Years 3 to 8. Entry is broadly non-selective academically. Most pupils come from professional families. Eighteen pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 24 receive support with their learning. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. No pupils are learning English as an additional language (EAL). Very few come from a minority ethnic background.
- 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 2013, and therefore it must:
- ensure that the necessary recruitment checks are carried out on all staff before they are appointed [National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults, and, for the same reason, National Minimum Standard 11, under Child protection].

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

- 2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Use self-evaluation procedures more effectively to identify developments in the delivery of national minimum standards.

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

- 2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in September 2010. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and has addressed all the recommendations then made. There is now one person outside the boarding house whom boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school; formal opportunities are provided for boarders to express their views; weekly residents' meeting records are thoroughly kept to contribute to boarders' welfare and appropriate training is undertaken by boarding staff.

### **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 The boarders receive comprehensive induction on arrival. An effective system of buddying and pastoral support is in place. Boarders report that there is a range of staff they can turn to for help. Boarders are provided with appropriate helpline contact numbers including details for the independent listener and the Children's Rights Director, addressing the recommendation from the previous inspection. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The required medical policies and protocols are in place. Staff have been appropriately trained. Suitable accommodation is available in the boarding house to isolate boarders who become sick. Boarders have appropriate access to local medical specialists. Prescription medicine is only given to the named boarder and an effective recording system is in place. Self-medicating boarders are appropriately risk assessed. The confidentiality and rights of boarders as patients are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Telephone and email connections enable pupils to contact family and friends. In the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussions, a small number of boarders commented that the ten-minute daily telephone window was occasionally insufficient. Whilst inspectors concur that the period of time allocated is short, in their pre-inspection questionnaire parents were clear they could easily contact the staff who care for their children and many boarders have regular opportunities to see their parents who visit frequently throughout the week. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation is clean, comfortable, secure, well ventilated and lit. It is exclusively for the use of boarders. Toilet and washing facilities are suitable for the numbers of boarders and provide adequate privacy. Boarders are able to personalise the pin boards in their dormitories. Study is mostly completed in the dining room and recently introduced individual reading lights in some dormitories enable boarders to read comfortably before lights out. The use of security cameras on the school premises is not unduly intrusive. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 In the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussions, boarders were unanimously complimentary about the varied and nutritious food provided, with individual needs being appropriately catered for. Boarders enjoy the family-style service at weekends. The kitchens were clean and well equipped and have received a number of awards recently including a Red Tractor Standard, a Marine Stewardship Council award for 2014 and 5 stars from the Food Standards Agency. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry procedures are well understood and ensure the cleaning and storage of boarders' clothing and that it is returned to the right person after cleaning. Boarders are able to obtain items of stationery as appropriate. In the pre-inspection questionnaire and interviews, some boarders expressed a concern around the safety of their possessions. Although there are no individual locking facilities for boarders, storage for their possessions is appropriate and their valuables are kept safely by house staff. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders have access to a good range of after-school clubs. Parents unanimously agreed in the pre-inspection questionnaire that the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. The demands on boarders are not overly onerous with



boarders reporting that they enjoy the many opportunities to sing and that they are happy with the balance of activities and free time. Staff demonstrate an empathy with the busy lives of the choristers. Boarders have access to information about the wider world. [NMS 10]

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

- 3.9 The school does not meet two of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The school takes care to ensure that all necessary measures ensure the boarders' health and safety and procedures are reviewed appropriately. Suitable risk assessments are carried out for relevant areas and boarders' welfare is safeguarded on residential trips. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 All necessary measures to reduce risks from fire have been taken. Equipment is tested and maintained on a regular basis and documentation and practices are in line with government guidance. Fire drills both in and out of regular school hours take place appropriately and records are carefully kept. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Boarding staff have a clear understanding of the importance of safeguarding the boarders' welfare. Procedures to promote the welfare of boarders are implemented effectively in many areas, although staff recruitment checks have not always been carried out with sufficient rigour. Staff training, including helpful induction guidance for newly appointed staff, is regularly carried out, and local authority approval for training has been appropriately sought. The school's procedures, including an annual review of child protection measures by the governors, are followed effectively, although minuting of the governors' annual review is not sufficiently detailed. Evidence shows that contact with the local safeguarding board is regular and constructive and the school demonstrates clear understanding of the requirement to make ready contact without investigation if any disclosure is made. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Boarders are clear about expectations of behaviour and appreciate the support and guidance given by the boarding staff. The expectations of choristers from themselves and staff are reflected in high standards of behaviour. A small number of boarders and parents expressed concern about the way in which the school deals with bullying. Inspectors did not agree. School policy is thorough and staff are clear about procedures to follow. Careful records are kept about any incidents, although these are not kept as a separate log and therefore patterns are not easily able to be tracked. In interviews boarders said that bullying is rare, but when it occurs they are confident that it is dealt with quickly and efficiently. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of boarders reported that the system for sanctions and rewards was not always administered fairly. In interviews, boarders stated that systems throughout the day and during prep were fair and clear. However, they were uncertain of the exact systems applied in the boarding accommodation. Inspectors concur. All the relevant documentation is now in place including: measures to combat bullying and to promote positive behaviour; school rules; disciplinary sanctions; when restraint is to be used; and arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school maintains a register of recruitment checks undertaken when staff are appointed, including those through the Disclosure and Barring Service. The required checks are mostly in place, although some checks were carried out late, including those for medical fitness and references. Appropriate checks are made on relevant

members of resident staff families who understand their responsibilities as on-site residents. The school's system for the recruitment of volunteers is currently under revision as parents' regular contact with pupils, albeit through direct work at the school with their own children, deems them engaged in regulated activity. As a consequence the required checks for enhanced disclosure, references and disqualification and barring list checks have not yet taken place. Visitors to boarding areas are carefully supervised.

3.15 The school does not appoint guardians for boarders. [NMS 14]

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

3.16 The school meets all of the NMS under this section

3.17 The school's boarding principles and practice are successfully implemented; choristers are positive about the caring environment which enables them to find boarding a rich, positive and rewarding experience which celebrates their talents. [NMS1]

3.18 Boarding within the school is effectively led and managed. Governors and senior leadership provide clear support for the boarding experience. Thorough communication has been established between academic, boarding and cathedral staff which supports links between the boarders' academic and pastoral life. Self-evaluation of boarding practice has been carefully undertaken to consider the welfare of choristers and is appropriately linked to school development planning. It is not always sufficiently rigorous in identifying developments in the delivery of the National Minimum Standards. All appropriate records are kept and monitored by the school and action is taken when necessary. The daily books, regular meetings, which are carefully minuted, and the exchange of emails provide a secure record about boarders' strengths and areas of concern and ensure all staff are kept informed. This addresses the concern of the previous inspection. Boarding staff have an appropriate level of experience or expertise, and provide appropriate support to less experienced colleagues. [NMS13]

3.19 Boarding staff have suitable job descriptions. Induction procedures have been carefully established and teaching house staff and school nurses undergo appraisals which enable reflection on their role and practice. Gap year assistants have undergone an informal process of review. Opportunities for training and continual professional development mostly take place in school, covering areas of welfare and pastoral care; recently this has been helpfully extended to visiting other boarding communities. Boarders are effectively supervised by a sufficient number of staff, by day and overnight, who are easily contactable. Registration processes enable staff to know where boarders are and the handover of responsibility for choristers from boarding house to cathedral staff is clear. The school's policy for missing pupils is known. Suitably separate accommodation is provided for staff and on the rare occasions boarders have access to it, this is carefully supervised. [NMS 15]

3.20 An equal opportunities statement sets out principles applying to both staff and pupils, and the school promotes diversity and tolerance for others. A small minority of parents said their child does not enjoy being a boarder. Inspection evidence does not support these views. All boarders, in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, said they enjoyed being a boarder and that they felt safe. [NMS18]

3.21 Boarders feel that their views are listened to and are confident that these will be taken seriously. House meetings take place regularly, are carefully minuted and

contribute strongly to the welfare of boarders, addressing the concern of the previous inspection. [NMS 17]

- 3.22 The complaints policy for parents complies with regulations. The responses of parents to the pre-inspection questionnaire were generally positive. A small minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the way their concerns are handled. Inspectors found that concerns received are carefully considered, and correspondence is efficiently kept. [NMS 18]
- 3.23 There are no prefects in boarding, but specific roles in the cathedral enable older choristers to take responsibility and care for those younger than themselves. [NMS 19]
- 3.24 The school does not arrange lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20]