



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

MAYFIELD SCHOOL

BOARDING WELFARE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Mayfield School

Full Name of School	Mayfield School
DfE Number	845/6035
Address	Mayfield School The Old Palace High Street Mayfield East Sussex TN20 6PH
Telephone Number	01435 874600
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Email Address	enquiry@mayfieldgirls.org
Headmistress	Miss Antonia Beary
Chair of Governors	Lady Davies of Stamford
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	356
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 179
Number of Boarders	Total: 177 Full: 127 Weekly: 50
Inspection Dates	06 Oct 2015 to 08 Oct 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, 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 Deborah Forbes	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Delyth Lynch	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head Pastoral, HMC school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 SUMMARY	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendation for further improvement	2
(iii) Progress since the previous inspection	2
3 COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS	3
(a) Boarding provision and care	3
(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding	4
(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision	5

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Mayfield School is a Catholic boarding and day school for girls aged from 11 to 18. It aims to educate girls to become mature, independent, confident and well-informed individuals, young women of faith and reason, ready to make their mark on the world, and supported by a network of lifelong friends. The school is administered by a board of governors, which is appointed in accordance with the articles of association. In 2014 a new chair of governors was elected.
- 1.2 The first Society of the Holy Child school, for the education of Catholic girls, was opened in St Leonards-on-Sea in 1846 by the Venerable Mother Cornelia Connelly, founder of the Society. In 1872 another school was opened on the historic site of the Old Palace in the village of Mayfield in East Sussex. The two schools merged in 1976. The sisters of the Society retain four places as trustees of the governing body and the community remains a presence on the site. The Catholic tradition continues to be upheld.
- 1.3 The school has four boarding houses: St Dunstan's for Years 12 and 13; Gresham for Year 11; Connelly for Years 9 and 10; and Leeds for Years 7 and 8.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection the school has opened a new sixth-form centre, and created new tennis courts and riding stables, with a covered sand school. It has invested in considerable refurbishment of existing buildings and facilities, including Gresham, the concert hall and the reception area.
- 1.5 There are currently 356 pupils in the school, 177 of whom are boarders. The majority of the boarders are full boarders but the school also accommodates some weekly boarders, as well as pupils boarding on a flexible basis. Day pupils come from a wide catchment area covering Kent and Sussex, and are almost all are of white British ethnicity, reflecting the local population. They are predominantly from business and professional backgrounds. Boarding pupils mainly come from Sussex, London and the surrounding counties, and a minority are from a range of other countries, including those in the Far East, Africa, America and Europe.
- 1.6 In total, 44 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, of whom 42 receive specialist learning support from the school. There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan. Of the 69 pupils who speak English as an additional language, 49 receive help with their English.
- 1.7 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 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. Adopt a more co-ordinated approach to the recording of sanctions and rewards.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in December 2009. The school was recommended to ensure that outdoor areas, such as the new car park, are adequately lit. It was also recommended to review and improve the system of monitoring records. These recommendations had been fully met by the time of the ISI integrated inspection in September 2012, when there were no recommendations concerning 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 A suitable induction programme is in place for new boarders and all houses operate an orientation evening on the first night of term. In response to the pre-inspection pupil questionnaire, a small minority of boarders stated that they do not know whom to turn to if they are unhappy. Inspectors found that boarders have a wide choice of staff in their houses and school who give help and advice, with posters visible in all houses providing details of external helplines. This choice was confirmed as understood by boarders in interviews. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has effective policies and arrangements for the care of boarders who are unwell and individual care plans are implemented for those boarders with specific medical needs. The health centre is staffed by qualified nurses, and a local doctor holds a surgery in the school three times a week. The administration, storage and recording of prescribed and non-prescribed medication are suitably controlled, and boarders' rights to confidentiality are respected. All boarders have access to local medical, dental, optometric and other specialist provision as necessary. Boarders may self-medicate if assessed as competent. The active promotion of boarders' well-being is demonstrated in a variety of ways through the health centre and across the school. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 In response to the questionnaire and in interviews, a small minority of boarders indicated that the controls applied to the internet by the school limit their ability to contact friends and family. Inspection found that boarders are able to contact their family and friends in private, without restriction, using house and mobile telephones, and by other electronic means. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding houses are well maintained, clean, comfortable, and suitably furnished and decorated. Reasonable adjustments have been made for pupils with specific individual needs. Boarders can personalise their own areas of their rooms. Social areas are bright and homely, and kitchens are well equipped. Boarders enjoy ample facilities for study and there are quiet spaces for study or prayer. Suitable toilet and washing facilities offer appropriate privacy. The boarding houses are for sole use of the boarders during term time and are secured to prevent unauthorised access. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Meals are prepared in well-equipped and hygienic kitchens. Breakfast and supper are served in a central dining hall, whilst lunch is served in three different areas. Boarders eat breakfast in their own houses at weekends. A small minority of pupils commented in response to the questionnaire that the food is not good. Inspectors reviewed menus and sampled food. They found that the published menu offers a variety of home-cooked, nutritious food as well as a salad bar. Those with specific dietary, religious or medical needs are suitably provided for. Boarders are able to prepare drinks and snacks in house kitchens at appropriate times. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry facilities vary across the houses but are suitable and efficient throughout. Boarders have access to a school shop and to the local village at specified times. In response to the questionnaire, a small minority of boarders suggested that their possessions are not safe. Inspectors found that all boarders have a lockable storage space and sixth-form boarders may lock their rooms. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 In response to the questionnaire and in interviews, a minority of boarders said that they are not happy with the balance of free time and activities. The inspection team found that the school offers many opportunities for boarders to participate in activities and that there is sufficient free time at suitable times. All boarders have access to newspapers, televisions and the internet, which allows them to keep abreast of current affairs and the wider world. The weekend programme offers a range of optional outings and the school provides a variety of safe areas where boarders can be alone if they wish. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The safety of boarders is promoted by effective implementation of the school's health and safety policy. Governors take responsibility for the safety of the site and the school ensures that all necessary measures are taken to ensure the boarders' health and safety. Staff are trained in health and safety practices, and effective protocols and policies to cover particular aspects of safety are implemented. Risk assessments are carried out for activities on and off site, for educational trips and for all school buildings. Housemistresses evaluate and monitor the risk assessments for their houses, noting when actions have been taken as a result of identified risks. Essential repairs in houses are carried out promptly. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The local fire service monitors the school's fire safety procedures, as do the governors. Fire risk assessments for every building are supported by regular checking and testing of all fire safety equipment to confirm effectiveness. Each term a fire drill is carried out in boarding time. It is recorded and monitored by senior staff. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school's safeguarding policy is regularly updated in line with regulatory changes. The governors are well informed about the policy and procedures, taking responsibility for their effectiveness, including the procedures for dealing with wider safeguarding issues. The school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is trained in child protection and inter-agency working, and ensures that the training of all staff is as approved by the local safeguarding board. Staff are confident about lines of reporting, how to respond to disclosures and report concerns of even a seemingly minor nature. The DSL has established effective relationships with local agencies. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Positive behaviour is encouraged through verbal praise, the awarding of house points and, for younger boarders, gold stars. Sanctions awarded within houses are recorded and monitored but, unless serious, are not added to a boarder's central school record, which limits effective monitoring. The school keeps detailed records of all serious sanctions which are monitored annually by the governing body. As required, the school has policies for restraint and for searching pupils and their possessions. Incidents of bullying are very rare, and the school has effective strategies for dealing with and monitoring them. In response to the questionnaire, a minority of boarders indicated that they thought teachers are not fair in the way that they issue rewards and sanctions. Inspection scrutiny of logs and interviews with boarders did not reveal unfairness, but the recording of sanctions is not well co-ordinated across the school. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Staff recruitment follows closely the required checks on staff, governors and volunteers. The checks are correctly and centrally recorded. Other adults living on the same premises as boarders all receive criminal records checks and sign agreements about their conduct and roles. [NMS 11]

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 the school's boarding principles and practices is displayed in all the boarding houses. It is well understood by staff and pupils, and is available to parents. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The governing body monitors and oversees the school's provision of boarding through regular visits, interviews and reports. The school's leadership of boarding is clear. It has recently enhanced links between academic and residential staff through the inclusion of academic tutors in the staffing of boarding houses in the evenings. Housemistresses are also members of the academic staff. Those leading and managing boarding demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles, ensuring that standards are met. Governors and school leadership actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Necessary policies are maintained, and records are kept and monitored, as are pertinent issues. Action is taken as a result to improve outcomes for boarders. [NMS13]
- 3.18 Staff who work in boarding have detailed job descriptions. They receive induction training in boarding and are well supported in their roles. As well as participating in the school's annual appraisal process, they are able to discuss and review their practice regularly. All are encouraged to participate in further training, both online and by attending approved courses. Roles of spouses are made clear. Outside teaching time, the staffing of boarding is sufficient and house staff are always able to seek further support if needed. At all times boarders are under the responsibility of a member of staff who knows their whereabouts and how to contact them. Signing in and out of houses is suitably enforced, and staff know the procedure for locating a missing pupil should the need arise. There is always at least one adult member of staff sleeping in the house overnight, more commonly two, and boarders can contact them when necessary. Staff have separate accommodation from the boarders, access to which is strictly and equably controlled. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders report that they are not discriminated against for any reason and they express appreciation of the inclusive, warm nature of their community. Boarding care is sensitive to the needs of all, ensuring that they can participate fully in school and boarding life. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 The school has a number of different, effective ways to secure boarders' views: through questionnaires, school and house councils, house meetings, dining committees and suggestion boxes. In response to the questionnaire, a minority of boarders indicated that the school does not ask for or respond to their opinions. From interviews and conversations with boarders, inspectors found that this mainly arose from recent changes to the school day. The school had considered reasons for making the changes and had carried out a consultation exercise with the pupils in advance. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school has a suitable policy for recording and responding to complaints from parents. A record is kept of actions taken as a result of all complaints, including an indication of whether they relate to boarding. The school aims to settle concerns and complaints quickly, and none have reached a panel hearing in the last year. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 A boarding prefect is elected to the school prefect body but there are also prefects with roles in boarding. They do not issue sanctions or rewards but rather represent

the views of boarders. They work under the supervision of staff and refer any concerns about behaviour to them. [NMS 19]

3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]