



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Joseph's College

Full Name of College	St Joseph's College
DfE Number	935/6044
Registered Charity Number	1051688
Address	St Joseph's College Belstead Road Ipswich Suffolk IP2 9DR England
Telephone Number	01473 690281
Fax Number	01473 602409
Email Address	admin@stjos.co.uk
Head	Mrs Danielle Clarke
Chair of Governors	Mr Paul Clement
Age Range	3 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	567
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (366 boys; 201 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 23 5-11: 135 11-18: 409
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 467
Number of Boarders	Total: 100 Full: 93 Weekly: 7
Inspection Dates	09 Feb to 11 Feb 2016

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 and a chapel assembly. 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 Ruth McFarlane

Reporting Inspector

Mr Alexander Tate

Team Inspector for Boarding
(Deputy Head and Head of Boarding, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Joseph's College is a co-educational independent day and boarding school, for pupils aged from 3 to 18 years. The school, founded in 1937, was incorporated in 1995 as a result of a merger with the School of Jesus and Mary and occupies a 60-acre site close to the centre of Ipswich. It is an educational charity overseen by a board of trustees, who have appointed a governing body to undertake its proprietorial responsibilities. A new principal was appointed in January 2014 and a new chair of governors elected in July 2014.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide the best all-round education within an inclusive Christian community. It seeks to meet the individual needs of each and every child's heart, mind, body and spirit, nurturing them to be their best in all their academic and extra-curricular activities. It also endeavours to create the conditions in which all pupils can achieve their best in a wide and varied range of subjects. The school's ethos is based on the values of its founder, St John Baptist De La Salle, and its patron saint St Joseph, which encapsulate its guiding principles. The school aims for pupils' spiritual and moral wellbeing to be at the heart of what it offers, while catering for the needs of all pupils in an inclusive environment.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 567 pupils, 201 girls and 366 boys, including 158 pupils, aged from 3 to 11, in the preparatory school. There were 409 pupils aged 11 to 18, in the senior school, including 146 in the sixth form. Boarding is available for pupils from the age of eleven. There are two boarding houses, both on the school site, which cater for the full senior age range. Goldrood House accommodates boys, and The Mews House accommodates boys and girls. Boarders are from a wide range of backgrounds and countries, including the UK, Russia, Spain, Thailand, Taiwan, Nigeria and China.
- 1.4 Overall, 95 pupils have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 73 receive additional support, mostly for dyslexia. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health care (EHC) plan. There are 104 pupils, mainly boarders in the senior school, for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and 86 of these require support.
- 1.5 The freehold of the site was purchased in January 2014. Other developments since the previous inspection include a new floodlit artificial playing field for hockey, tennis and netball, together with a new changing room complex. A new technology centre was opened in September 2015. Boarding accommodation has been increased, and communal and kitchen areas refurbished.
- 1.6 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. Implement the plans for further improving the quality of the boarding accommodation.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in March 2013, as part of an integrated inspection. There were no boarding-related recommendations.

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 school provides suitable induction, including a guidance handbook and allocated 'buddy' support from experienced boarders. Most boarders, in questionnaire responses, confirmed that they enjoy boarding and can turn to a member of staff or a senior pupil for support. In addition, contact details of outside helplines are clear, including an independent listener and the Children's Commissioner. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school implements appropriate policies for boarders' care when unwell or injured and these support boarders' mental and physical health and their emotional wellbeing. Policies include first aid, managing chronic conditions and disabilities, dealing with emergencies and the use of homely remedies. In questionnaire responses, most boarders agreed that staff show concern for them. The medical centre is suitably equipped to cater for boarders who need to stay overnight, with appropriately segregated accommodation, including toilets and washing facilities. Qualified staff are on hand and boarders can arrange appointments with other nearby medical professionals, including with a doctor at the local surgery. Any medication is securely stored, appropriate records are maintained and prescribed medicine only given to named individuals. Boarders self-medicate only after assessment to do so. Boarders' right to refuse treatment is respected and confidentiality maintained. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 The school enables boarders to contact their parents by telephone, email or internet communication, in privacy. Appropriate systems are in place to ensure safe use of the internet. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The boarding accommodation meets the needs of the boarders. It offers suitable protection and separation between genders, and it is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained. Facilities exist for boarders with restricted mobility. Risk assessments are in place for all areas. The plans that are in place, for improving the accommodation for boarders, have not yet been fully implemented, so some areas and furnishings are tired. Areas for study, recreation and sleeping are suitable. Bedding is clean and warm. Washing and toilet facilities are appropriately private. Boarders can, and do, personalise their rooms with posters and personal items. Unauthorised access to boarders' accommodation is prevented by an effective security system that is not intrusive. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Main meals are prepared centrally, in hygienic conditions. Boarders' kitchens are also clean, hygienic yet homely, and well-stocked with provisions. In the questionnaire, the majority of boarders indicated that the food is not good and a small minority were not happy with the provision of snacks and drinking water outside meal times. Inspection evidence, including discussions with staff and boarders, and checks of menus, provisions and facilities, and the views of parents who participate in unannounced 'secret scoffer' tasting sessions to check for themselves, demonstrates that meals are nutritious and of sufficient quality, quantity and variety. Outside meal times, boarders have ready access to drinking water and snacks. Specific dietary or religious needs are met. Boarders with disabilities affecting eating are enabled to eat with choice and dignity. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 Laundry provision is adequate and items are returned to the correct boarder. Boarders can launder their own clothes if they wish. Boarders obtain personal and stationery items locally. In the questionnaire, a small minority of boarders felt that their belongings are not safe. Inspectors checked the arrangements and found them suitable. Boarders each have a lockable safe. Money and valuables can also be stored securely with staff. Protocols for searching boarders' possessions accord with official guidance. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Most boarders in their questionnaire responses felt that they could join in a good range of activities. A small minority indicated they are not happy with the balance of activities and free time but the school timetables show a suitable balance. Boarders have access to a range of risk-assessed activities in the evening and at the weekend, including badminton, chess, ice skating, and cinema trips. The grounds of the school provide many risk-assessed areas for contemplation and recreation. Boarders can be alone if they wish. Television, newspapers and the internet, available in the boarding houses, provide news about the wider world. [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 premises, facilities and accommodation are maintained at a level that, as far as practicable, assures the boarders' health, safety and wellbeing. Appropriate policies and procedures cover all areas of health and safety including risk assessments for school premises, activities and trips. These are thoroughly implemented, ensuring that any potential risks are identified and action taken. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Fire risk is properly managed in all respects through regular professional reviews, frequent testing of equipment and the high proportion of staff trained as fire marshals. Regular fire drills take place, including during boarding time. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The arrangements for safeguarding boarders and promoting their welfare are fully implemented, and reviewed annually under the auspices of the governing body. Staff training is up-to-date and of sufficient frequency. New staff are quickly inducted into their child protection responsibilities. Several senior staff are trained as designated senior leaders for safeguarding, with one named as overall lead. Records show prompt referral where necessary and well-established links with outside agencies. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The policies to promote positive behaviour and guard against harassment and bullying, including cyber bullying, have regard to the latest guidance. They include the protocols for the restraint of boarders, and those for searching them or their possessions, when necessary, as well as a code of conduct, school rules and sanctions. The arrangements are understood by staff and boarders and were seen to work effectively in practice. In the questionnaire, a few boarders indicated that the school does not deal effectively with bullying. A thorough scrutiny of the detailed records kept by the school and discussions with staff and boarders did not support that view. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Records show that, before appointment, all the required checks on suitability of staff are carried out and listed properly on a centralised register. Safer recruitment training has been completed by relevant staff. Spouses and others over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as boarders provide information about their backgrounds, are appropriately checked by the criminal

records bureau and have written agreements concerning their roles, including their use of their accommodation. They are aware of the requirement to report any charge or conviction to a designated senior member of staff. Arrangements for the supervision of visitors are suitable. The school does not make any arrangements for the appointment of guardians. [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 The school's boarding principles and practice documents are published on the school website and also available in handbooks for boarders, parents and staff. The principles are fully reflected in practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Parents' questionnaire responses were fully supportive of a range of boarding features including its leadership and management, which offer many years of relevant experience and expertise. The governing body makes regular visits and reports on the effectiveness of the clear leadership and management of boarding, taking appropriate action if necessary. Governors oversee the boarding development plans, which are appropriately linked to self-evaluation. Not all of the plans for accommodation improvement have been implemented. Close links ease communication between boarding and academic staff, actively promote boarders' wellbeing and support their academic progress and personal development. Boarding standards are met because staff at all levels have appropriate skills and know and fulfil the boarding requirements. All required policies and records are maintained and monitored. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Any volunteers and all boarding staff receive induction training on appointment and have detailed job descriptions. Their work is regularly and formally reviewed. Ongoing training is provided. Roles of spouses and other adult members of staff households are made clear. Supervision of boarders is always adequate, by qualified and experienced personnel. Boarders know which staff are in charge, including overnight, and how to contact them. Registration frequency and sign-in and sign-out procedures ensure that staff always know the whereabouts of boarders. The procedure for missing boarders is known to staff, including when police are to be called. Arrangements for staff to sleep overnight in the boarding houses are suitable. Residential staff have suitable accommodation and boarders' access to it is appropriately supervised. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Policies set out procedures to ensure the full promotion of equality and understanding of diversity. No discrimination is evident on any grounds. Boarders, including those with SEND or EAL, and those with sports or academic talents, are all individually supported with sensitive care. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Formal and informal opportunities for boarders to raise issues and give their views include suggestions boxes and committees, for example, a food committee. Boarders can point to the school's positive response to their requests, such as changing the sound of the bell rung when it is time to get up in the morning. Boarders are not penalised if they raise a concern in good faith. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 A suitable complaints policy for parents is available on the school's website and its procedures are implemented correctly. Any complaints which are related specifically to boarding are identified, together with the action taken. [NMS 18]

- 3.22 There are no boarding prefects but some boarders are school prefects. Job descriptions, training, and staff supervision ensure there is no abuse of the role. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The protocols for the school's use of long stay lodgings and host families are fully followed and recorded. The school makes the arrangements clear to parents, maintains thorough records of its checks and actions concerning these arrangements, including its vetting procedures, visits to check the accommodation, records of training provided to adults and notes of the regular consultations with the boarders and their parents. [NMS 20]