



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BEESTON HALL SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Beeston Hall School

Full Name of School	Beeston Hall School		
DfE Number	926/6058		
Registered Charity Number	311274		
Address	Beeston Hall School West Runton Cromer Norfolk NR27 9NQ		
Telephone Number	01263 837324		
Fax Number	01263 838177		
Email Address	office@beestonhall.co.uk		
Head	Mr Robin Gainher		
Chair of Governors	Mr David Marris		
Age Range	7 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	125		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (77 boys; 48 girls)		
Numbers by Age	7-11:	78	11-13: 47
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	69	
Number of Boarders	Total:	56	
	Full:	49	Weekly: 7
Inspection Dates	30 Sept 2014 to 2 Oct 2014		

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 March 2011 and can be found at 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 chair of 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 Bridget Windley

Reporting Inspector

Mr Lawrence Groves

Team Inspector for Boarding (Headmaster, ISA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Beeston Hall School is an independent co-educational day and boarding preparatory school for pupils from the ages of 7 to 13. The school occupies a site of about 30 acres and is situated on the north Norfolk coast near the town of Cromer. Established in 1948, the school has been developed around a large Regency house to which a range of purpose-built educational facilities have been added, to include 25 acres of grass pitches, a full-size artificial turf pitch, all-weather games courts, an indoor shooting range and an outdoor heated swimming pool. The school is administered as a charity by a board of governors, who have a range of skills and expertise. There are two boarding houses. Main House, which is located within the main school building, is for boarders in Years 3 to 7 and Deterdings is a separate building solely for those in Year 8.
- 1.2 The total number of pupils at the time of the inspection was 125, of whom 77 were boys and 48 were girls. Opportunities for pupils to board commence at Year 3, with full-time, weekly and flexible boarding offered. At the time of the inspection, there were 49 full boarders (33 boys and 16 girls) and 7 weekly boarders (5 boys and 2 girls). In addition, 10 pupils were boarding on a flexible basis (4 boys and 6 girls). The school has identified 35 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and 4 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Boarders are drawn mostly from business and professional families who live locally, with a small number whose parents work in the armed services. Currently, almost all pupils are of white British origin, with a few from European countries and a small number from Japan.
- 1.3 The school aims to create a caring, secure environment so that all in the school feel a sense of worth. It believes that above all else boarding should be enjoyable. It seeks to enable the boarders to cope with others, build bridges of understanding between different factions and gain the skills necessary for life in the outside world.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) 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 2013.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Improve the systems for boarders to contact friends and family.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in March 2011. The recommendations made, regarding the school's complaints procedures and the monitoring of records of risk assessments, sanctions, complaints and accidents, have been met in full.

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 On arrival new boarders are given a comprehensive handbook and allocated a 'boarding buddy' and a 'day buddy', which ensures that they have appropriate support and guidance to help them settle into the boarding life of the school. Boarders have a choice of staff to whom they can turn if they have any concerns, including access to an individual who is independent of the school but well known to the boarders. Contact details for appropriate helplines are prominently displayed on notice boards around the school. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school implements effective policies for the care of boarders who are unwell, which include arrangements for first aid, supporting those with various medical conditions and dealing with any emergencies. The surgery is well equipped and the records for all medical care and the dispensing of medicines are carefully maintained. Medicines are securely stored and clear procedures for administration are followed. Household remedies are available where deemed appropriate. The school has separate sick bays for boys and girls who are sick or injured and these are overseen by suitably qualified staff. Boarders have access to a local doctor, a local minor injuries unit and medical specialist services such as dentists and opticians. Prescribed medicines are carefully managed and those who self-medicate are assessed as suitably competent to do so. Pupil information is held in confidence and boarders' rights as patients are fully respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders contact their families by using telephone cards on one of two designated telephones in the school. Those from overseas often use video messaging to contact their close family members. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a very small minority of boarders indicated that communication with friends and family is sometimes difficult. In interviews, some of the younger boarders explained that they find it confusing to use the telephone cards, whilst the older boarders commented that occasionally the internet is unreliable. Inspectors judge that these issues do not make it easy for boarders to make contact with home. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The boarding accommodation comprises two suitably maintained houses that are appropriately lit, heated and ventilated. Both houses have separate dormitory wings for boys and girls, and each house has an attractive communal room that is well equipped for relaxation and socialising. In Deterdings, the boarders enjoy the privilege of having a kitchen. All boarders sleep in suitably sized rooms, with appropriate furnishing and adequate space for personal belongings and clothes. Clean bedding provides appropriate comfort and warmth. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their rooms with posters, photographs, soft toys and their own duvet covers. Washroom facilities are appropriate in number and offer suitable privacy. Boarders also have access to a well-equipped games room with facilities for pool, table football and table tennis. The boarding house sleeping accommodation is for the sole use of the boarders during term time, and both houses are secure from unauthorised access. The use of CCTV and other security arrangements do not intrude unreasonably on the boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Nutritious food is prepared in the school in a spacious, well-equipped and hygienic kitchen, and served in a clean and airy dining area. Meals are appropriate in quantity, quality, choice and variety, and can be tailored to suit special dietary, medical or religious needs. In response to the questionnaires, a minority of boarders

reported that they do not always find the food to their liking; however, in discussions they were very positive about the meals and reported that they have frequent opportunities to discuss food and put forward their views regarding menu changes. Inspectors held a discussion with the catering manager and looked at menus. They sampled the food at every mealtime and considered it to be suitable. During the evening, Year 8 boarders are able to prepare their own snacks, Year 7 pupils are provided with biscuits and fruit is always available for the younger boarders. Boarders have unlimited access to water and milk. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 Frequent laundering of bedding and personal clothes is carried out on site, and laundry is safely returned to each boarding house by the matrons. Stationery is kept in the office, where boarders can request items. They may obtain personal toiletries from the matron's room or on the planned shopping trips that take place on the occasional weekend. A small minority of boarders indicated in response to the questionnaires that their belongings are not safe. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Inspectors found that boarders' personal belongings can be stored in their lockable tuck boxes and house parents look after any valuable items and money. In interviews, boarders explained that this was not an issue in the boarding houses. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 The school has extensive facilities on site for recreation and relaxation, and there is an appropriate balance of activity involvement and free time. Evening activities range from cooking supper in the headmaster's kitchen to shooting on the rifle range, and recent weekend trips out have included visits to theme parks and to a pony-trekking centre. Boarders enjoy a variety of communal areas for playing games or quiet reading. The school chapel is enjoyed by boarders as a space for prayer meetings and quiet reflection. Boarders access the world news every morning through radio or television and daily newspapers are available in the library. [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 places importance on ensuring that all measures are undertaken to promote the health and safety of the pupils. The health and safety committee meets termly to assess risks for all areas of the buildings and grounds. Detailed risk assessments are carried out for the frequent trips outside the school for boarders. The written health and safety policy is reviewed annually and regular checks of equipment cover all aspects of safety. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that the boarding environment keeps their children safe. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school minimises the risk of fire by undertaking an annual review of the fire risk assessment, and maintaining all fire equipment in good order. Boarders are aware of the fire evacuation procedures, which are practised in each house during boarding hours at least once a term. These regular fire drills are appropriately recorded and evaluated. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school's safeguarding policy is in line with the requirements of the local safeguarding board and arrangements for safeguarding boarders are suitably implemented. All staff are trained appropriately, with the designated officers undertaking a higher level of multi-agency training. A designated governor for safeguarding works closely with the school's welfare team to monitor procedures. Any concerns about individual boarders are handled sensitively and detailed records are kept. [NMS 11]

- 3.13 Good behaviour is promoted through the support and guidance that boarders receive from boarding staff. Clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies outline the expectations of boarders. Boarders are aware of the school rules, and in discussions they spoke highly about the friendly environment of the boarding community and the mutual respect they have for each other. A very small minority of boarders indicated in response to the questionnaire that staff are not always fair with rewards and sanctions, and boarders say that this applies to issues within the day school. However, a separate system of behaviour management operates within the boarding environment from that of the day school, and particular consideration is given in boarding to providing positive rewards. Misdemeanours lead to a loss of privileges. A very small minority of boarders indicated in questionnaire responses that the school does not always deal well with incidents of bullying behaviour, though these views were not supported by any boarders in interviews or discussions. Inspectors found that considerable work has been undertaken by the school to promote positive behaviour, and detailed records indicate that incidents of unkind behaviour are swiftly and carefully managed, with appropriate sanctions used. As required, the school has policies for when restraint can be used and for the arrangements for searching pupils, and suitable records are kept. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school operates safe recruitment procedures and the central register of appointments is accurately maintained. Visitors to the school do not have access to the boarding house, except with the permission of house staff and under supervision. Boarders from overseas have guardians but these are not appointed by the school. [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 principles for boarding are clearly displayed on house notice boards and reflect the boarding experience enjoyed by the boarders. These principles are included in the boarding handbooks issued to staff, boarders and their parents. All parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed unanimous satisfaction with the organisation and management of boarding. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Boarding staff provide clear leadership of boarding and are constantly reviewing its development and practice. The governors support and value the boarding experience, and they give significant attention to this by appointing a governor with specific boarding responsibilities. Boarding staff are suitably trained, with experienced staff being instrumental in the induction of new members of the team. Links between the pastoral and academic staff are effective, and maintained formally through regular meetings, informally through daily communication and through the help given in boarding time to boarders with SEND. The required records are suitably monitored, maintained and stored, which, in respect of risk assessments, sanctions, complaints and accidents, represents an improvement since the previous inspection. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All boarding staff have access to appraisal and frequent training for their responsibilities. They have appropriate job descriptions and new members of boarding staff receive induction training. Spouses of house staff are clear about their responsibilities. Sufficient staff ensure that boarders are always supervised effectively. Boarders know how to contact a member of staff at all times, including at night, and staff are aware of the missing pupil policy. Suitable accommodation for the residential boarding staff is separate from that of the boarders, and groups of pupils only ever visit staff accommodation for specific purposes, such as carrying equipment or delivering a message. [NMS 15]

- 3.19 Staff are clear about their responsibilities for ensuring that boarders have equal opportunities and due attention is given to any religious, cultural and dietary needs. Boarders from overseas with EAL and those boarders with SEND are well cared for and fully integrated into the boarding community. In discussions, all boarders reported that staff treat them fairly and without discrimination. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 A very small minority of boarders indicated in response to the questionnaire that the school does not always ask for their opinions and act on them. Inspection findings did not support this view. Inspectors found that boarders' views are gathered through regular questionnaires, and at the termly pastoral and boarding council meetings, minutes are taken and actions identified. 'Bright ideas boxes' and 'worry boxes' are also readily available for boarders to put forward suggestions. For example, a recent request by the Year 8 boarders to bring in a late night snack from home has been granted. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school has a clear complaints procedure, which has improved since the previous inspection and is available to parents. Records of complaints are suitably maintained and monitored, and show that the procedure is operated effectively. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Year 7 dormitory captains and Year 8 boarding prefects assist house staff in the smooth running of the houses and are given appropriate training and supervision. Their job descriptions require them to act as role models, providing support and advice for their juniors as necessary. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]