



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

FINBOROUGH SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Finborough School

Full Name of School	Finborough School
DfE Number	935/6062
Address	Finborough School The Hall Great Finborough Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 3EF
Telephone Number	01449 773600
Fax Number	01449 773601
Email Address	admin@finboroughschool.co.uk
Principal	Mr James Sinclair
Proprietor	Mr James Sinclair
Age Range	2 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	326
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (169 boys; 157 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 4 5-11: 116 3-5 (EYFS): 29 11-18: 177
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 274
Number of Boarders	Total: 52 Full: 49 Weekly: 3
Inspection dates	02 Dec 2014 to 04 Dec 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. This was undertaken by ISI in March 2012.

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 proprietor, 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

Mr Paul Spillane

Ms Anne Cox

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Boarding Advisor,
GSA school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 SUMMARY	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendations 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 Finborough School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of 2 to 18. It is situated in and around Finborough Hall, in Great Finborough, near Stowmarket, Suffolk. The school was founded in 1993 by the parents of the present principal, who took over the leadership and management of the school in 2008, and became the proprietor in 2013. He is supported in this role by a management team of senior staff. Finborough School's motto is "Strive for the highest" and its stated aim is to provide each pupil with the best preparation for life. The school endeavours to assist each pupil to develop confidence, self-esteem and a sense of identity. It seeks to give the boarders a safe and nurturing environment within the warmth of a happy and loving family.
- 1.2 There are currently 326 pupils in the school, 169 boys and 157 girls, of whom 52 are boarders. The boarders comprise 25 boys and 27 girls, and they are aged from 9 to 18. They are accommodated in two boarding houses, Petteward for girls and Wollaston for boys. The boys' housemaster and the girls' housemistress are assisted by a number of house tutors.
- 1.3 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 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Schedule some fire practices at times when boarders may be expected to be asleep.
2. Ensure that any record of dealing with a complaint is formally signed off when the matter is concluded.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in March 2012. The school has met all of the recommendations, which related to: the training of staff in safeguarding; job descriptions, induction, regular reviews of practice and training for boarding staff; the induction of new boarders; the recording of concerns about boarders; familiarity with the identity of the independent listener; keeping all documents on fire procedures consistently and centrally; and the review of policies and procedures.

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 New boarders have 'taster days' before they join the school. They are assigned 'buddies' and given a useful handbook and a questionnaire as part of a full induction programme, which represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Boarders know that there are many people to whom they can turn with personal concerns. Contact details of helplines, including that of the Children's Commissioner, are posted on noticeboards and contained in the "Who can help me?" leaflet. They are also familiar with the identity of the independent listener, a recommendation at the time of the previous inspection. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Appropriate policies are implemented for the care of boarders who are unwell, including those with chronic conditions and disabilities, as well as dealing with medical emergencies and the administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication. Parents give signed consent to certain treatments and the confidentiality of boarders is properly respected. At the time of the inspection, the medical centre was being re-sited, but boarders had access to all necessary medical services and facilities, including separate sick rooms for boys and girls. Boarders may use local medical, dental, optometric and other specialist services. There are 28 first aid trained members of staff, six to the higher level. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders can readily contact family and friends, electronically or by landline telephone. The quality of the internet connection varies from room to room and a programme of improvement is being undertaken. The school educates pupils about e-safety and cyberbullying; the necessary controls and filters are employed on school computers. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The two boarding houses are adjacent to each other in the main building and are separated by gender. The accommodation is adequately furnished in the dormitories. The common rooms' furnishing is of a generally higher standard. A minority of the parents in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that the accommodation was not comfortable. In respect to some of the mattresses, the evidence of the inspection supported this view. All of the boarding accommodation is undergoing a phased programme of refurbishment. Heating, lighting and ventilation are sufficient and the standard of cleanliness everywhere is high. Lavatories and showers afford privacy; however, the water pressure in the showers is weak. Bedding is clean, suitable and warm. Boarders are able to personalise their own areas with posters, photographs and items from home. Both houses have facilities for organised and private study. Access to the houses is secure. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 A large majority of the boarders who responded to the questionnaire stated that they were dissatisfied with the food and unhappy with the availability of snacks and drinking water outside meal times. The evidence of the inspection did not support these views. Meals were found to be nutritious and plentiful, with a good choice of hot and cold dishes. Meals are prepared and served in hygienic conditions, with particular dietary needs appropriately catered for. In the evenings and at weekends, boarders may prepare hot drinks and snacks in the boarding houses and all of those interviewed expressed satisfaction with these arrangements. Drinking water is available throughout the day. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 The laundry arrangements are efficient, with bedding being changed weekly and clothes able to be washed at any time. Boarders may buy personal items and stationery at local shops. Staff provide locked storage of pupils' valuables, money and passports. The minority of respondents to the questionnaire who said that their possessions were not safe appear to be referring to toiletries and food rather than to more substantial items; all have lockable cupboards in their dormitories. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders are generally pleased with the provision of weekend activities, which include trips to places of entertainment and cultural interest. The new sports hall has added a considerable extra dimension to the opportunities for recreation and exercise. Boarders have access to plenty of indoor and outdoor facilities, and there are places where they can be quiet. Television, newspapers and the internet enable them to be aware of events in the world outside school. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The implementation of relevant policies and procedures ensures boarders' safety. The school premises, including the boarding accommodation, are maintained to a standard whereby, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, welfare and safety of all pupils are safeguarded. Newly revised policies pay special attention to the management of risk; thorough risk assessments cover life in the school and activities further afield. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Thorough precautions are taken to minimise the risk from fire. Regular practices are held during the day and in boarding time, but none is scheduled at a time when all boarders may be expected to be asleep. Checks and tests are undertaken at specified intervals on equipment and appliances. In accordance with the recommendation of the previous inspection, all documentation is kept centrally and consistently. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school has appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders. The safeguarding policies and procedures and their implementation are reviewed annually by the proprietor, the designated safeguarding leads and senior colleagues. The minutes of the review show that all aspects are afforded thorough consideration. All members of staff receive child protection training as part of their induction programme and thereafter at regular intervals, a requirement at the time of the previous inspection. The designated safeguarding leads are suitably experienced and trained, and links have been established with the local authority children's services, from which support and advice are readily available. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 In their responses to the questionnaire, a majority of boarders and a minority of parents felt that the school did not deal well with bullying and a minority of boarders said that they did not get on well together. Nearly all of the boarders interviewed, however, stated that relationships within the boarding houses were very good and that bullying was not an issue. They were confident that any instances would be dealt with quickly and fairly, and the school's bullying log indicates that the few recorded cases were satisfactorily resolved. The content of the policy to promote good behaviour is understood by staff and pupils. About one-half of the boarder respondents to the questionnaire wrote that teachers were not fair in the way they gave rewards and sanctions, but all of those interviewed said that they were well treated and that rewards and sanctions given in the boarding houses were fair. Inspection evidence indicated that the application of rewards and sanctions was reasonable and proportionate. Pupils know about the policies relating to physical

restraint and the searching of pupils and their possessions, neither of which have needed to be enforced. [NMS 12]

- 3.14 The staff recruitment policy is clear and thorough. All required checks on members of the teaching and non-teaching staff have been undertaken before their appointment and the single central register has been completed accurately. Visitors to the boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised. [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 statement of boarding principles and practice is published on the website, in the boarding handbook and on the house noticeboards. The boarders are aware of it and it is fully implemented. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 A small minority of parents in their responses to the questionnaire felt that boarding was not organised and managed effectively and a minority did not think that the school was well led and managed. The evidence of the inspection did not support these views. There is clear management of the leadership, practice and development of boarding and all with responsibilities in this area are adequately experienced and trained. The new shared office between the houses facilitates consistency of practice and effective communication. A programme of regular meetings between boarding staff and key senior colleagues, including the principal, together with frequent informal communication ensures that all parties are kept abreast of matters relating to boarding and the boarders' well-being. Clear procedures for recording concerns and sharing information about boarders have been established in response to a recommendation of the previous inspection, and these are being further improved by the introduction of a new centralised information system. Effective links exist between residential and academic staff, including those responsible for boarders with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language. The required records are reviewed, properly maintained and monitored in response to the previous inspection. The future of boarding is given due attention in the development plan. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Boarding staff have job descriptions, appropriate induction, regular appraisal and opportunities to benefit from in-house and external training courses as recommended at the time of the previous inspection. Supervision of pupils is suitable and effectively monitored, both on-site and when out on trips. At all times boarders know who is responsible for them, and a signing-out book enables staff to keep track of boarders' whereabouts. Staff are aware of the procedure to follow in the unlikely event that a pupil goes missing. At least one adult is resident in each house overnight and boarders can easily contact them if necessary. Boarders' access to staff accommodation is correctly conducted and supervised. [NMS 15].
- 3.19 The equality policy is clear and, while suitable provision is made for different needs, boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination. A small minority of parents in their response to the questionnaire felt that staff did not treat their child as an individual, nor that the experience of boarding helped their child's progress and development. The evidence of the inspection did not support either of these views. Staff know the boarders very well as individuals and treat them with appropriate care and understanding, and the pupils interviewed found boarding to be an enriching experience. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 A minority of boarder respondents to the questionnaire felt that the school did not ask for their opinions and respond to them. Inspection evidence found that this was

not the case. The school council and the boarding councils meet regularly and they have effected improvements and changes, for instance to menus and to the running of the houses. Boarders say that staff are approachable, and 'conversation clinics' have been introduced to encourage pupil feedback. [NMS 17]

- 3.21 The complaints procedure is available to parents and is correctly followed. The few formal complaints that have been received in recent years have been responded to promptly and professionally. Detailed records are kept, but it is not always the case that the paperwork is signed off when the matter is brought to a conclusion. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 House prefects receive child protection training and their job description requires them to set a good example and to lend a listening ear. Younger boarders say that prefects are approachable and helpful. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]