



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**CLIFTON COLLEGE**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Clifton College

Full Name of College	<b>Clifton College</b>		
DfE Number	<b>801/6000</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>311735</b>		
Address	<b>Clifton College 32 College Road Clifton Bristol Bristol BS8 3JH</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>0117 3157000</b>		
Fax Number	<b>0117 3157101</b>		
Email Address	<b>info@clifton-college.avon.sch.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Mark Moore</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Tim Ross</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>1238</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (757 boys; 481 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5(EYFS):	<b>82</b>	5-11: <b>271</b>
			11-18: <b>885</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>820</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>418</b>	
	Full:	<b>322</b>	Weekly: <b>96</b>
Inspection dates	<b>03 Dec 2013 to 05 Dec 2013</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 November 2009 (Upper School) and January 2010 (Preparatory School) 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 governors' representative, 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 Elaine Brook	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Patricia Guy	Team Inspector for Boarding (Learning Support Teacher, HMC school)
Mr Michael Renahan	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Boarding, HMC school)
Mr Jeffrey Shipway	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head Pastoral & Boarding, Society of Heads)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Established in 1862 on its present site in Bristol, Clifton College is an independent day and boarding school offering a continuous education for boys and girls aged from three to eighteen years. The school received a royal charter in 1887 and is a charity, administered by a board of governors. Originally a boys school, it became fully co-educational in 1987. The school has a Christian foundation but an inclusive tradition, welcoming pupils of all faiths or none. Historically, it provided for pupils of Jewish faith and buildings on site include both a chapel and a synagogue. Following the vision of the original founder, it aims to offer pupils a broad and liberal education, enabling them to develop their intellects to the full and grow in confidence, becoming well equipped for their future lives and with a strong sense of who they are and what they can achieve.
- 1.2 Three individual schools cater for pupils of different ages. Butcombe is a day school, catering for 214 pupils aged from three to eight. A further 313 pupils aged between 8 and 13 attend the pre-school, of whom 41 board from the age of 10. The majority of pupils transfer to the upper school, which currently has 257 boarders out of 408 pupils aged from 13 to 16 and 308 sixth formers, of whom 178 board.
- 1.3 Pupils are accommodated in nine houses close to the main school and can board for four or seven nights weekly, although the majority choose the full-time option. At the time of the inspection, 321 pupils board full-time and 58 board for four nights. These boarders include 242 boys and 137 girls. Each house is led by a housemaster or a housemistress, supported by a deputy and house tutors. The head of boarding of both the preparatory and the upper school is a member of the senior leadership team. Since the previous boarding inspection in 2009, refurbishment of the houses has continued and a new annexe provides additional accommodation for girls.
- 1.4 The majority of pupils originate from the United Kingdom, with just over one-quarter coming from overseas, representing 46 different nationalities. 185 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and of these 80 receive specialist language support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs, but the school has identified 94 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 68 receive specialist provision.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the upper school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Upper School***

School	NC name
Third Form	Year 9
Fourth Form	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower VIth	Year 12
Upper VIth	Year 13

## **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. Involve all staff in the self-evaluation of boarding standards in their house
2. Extend the practice of allowing pupils to express concerns and opinions anonymously as well as through the various councils and committees.

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

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspections were undertaken by Ofsted in November 2009 (upper school) and January 2010 (preparatory school). Appropriate action has been taken to address the recommendations made regarding the upper school. There were no recommendations made for the preparatory school.

### **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 comprehensive induction process for new boarders includes a handbook outlining the routines for each house and regular familiarisation meetings. Boarders are guided through their first days by an older pupil and have a range of staff to whom they can turn for personal support. Contact details for the house staff, as well as independent external sources of advice, including confidential helplines, are clearly displayed. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Appropriate policies are in place for the care of boarders who are unwell. Minor ailments are treated by house staff with relevant training in first-aid, whilst boarders with more serious conditions receive care from qualified personnel in suitable accommodation or are offered access to a full range of other medical and specialist services. Older boarders may self-medicate if assessed as sufficiently responsible. The confidentiality and rights of boarders as patients are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are able to contact their families easily and in privacy at all reasonable times. Systems are in place to monitor and control the use of electronic communication to prevent unsafe practice by boarders. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Accommodation is suitably equipped and furnished as appropriate for the numbers and ages of the boys and girls who board. A continuous refurbishment programme has ensured that the recommendations from the previous inspection report are fully met. Sleeping accommodation for boys is separate from that for girls and varies in size so that boarders can request single rooms or share as appropriate. Boarders enjoy personalising their bed space and common rooms. Facilities for recreation and study include appropriately private washrooms. Accommodation is secure but measures do not impinge upon boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 All boarders, including those with special dietary needs, are provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition and quantity. In their response to the questionnaire, some boarders indicated a degree of dissatisfaction with the food, but the inspection team found no evidence to support this. When interviewed, boarders were appreciative of recent efforts made to add variety and improve quality. Accommodation in the main school provides for the hygienic preparation and consumption of food. All boarding houses have kitchen areas which allow ready access to additional drinks and snacks. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry systems for boarders' clothes and bedding are efficient and care is taken to ensure that personal items are safely returned. Boarders can purchase items of stationery and toiletries from the school or the nearby shops. Lockable furniture in bedrooms allows boarders to keep their possessions safe whilst more valuable items are securely stored in the offices. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 The range and variety of clubs and activities in the evenings and during the weekend means that some boarders said that they find it difficult to ensure sufficient personal relaxation time, but inspectors judge that there are appropriate facilities to be alone or to mix informally with friends should they so wish. The provision of newspapers, television and the internet enables contact with the outside world, and boarders have access to local facilities in the nearby town appropriate to their age. [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 has comprehensive arrangements for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of boarders. Records and risk assessments are monitored to ensure compliance with all relevant regulations. Boarders state that they feel safe in their boarding houses. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Secure systems are in place to minimise the risk of harm from fire, in line with all relevant legislation. House fire drills are regularly conducted at a range of times and recorded appropriately. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 All documentation concerning the safeguarding of children is implemented, including the induction and subsequent training of personnel. The governing body reviews the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures on an annual basis. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Suitable policies to promote good behaviour are understood by all. Some pupils indicated that they did not think the staff were consistently fair in the use of rewards and sanctions. Inspectors found that each boarding house implements a system of rewards and sanctions which differs but is appropriate. The school recording system is monitored so that no unfairness is evident. The majority of boarders and their parents say that any cases of bullying are rare and dealt with appropriately. A wide range of support is available to pupils who are experiencing difficulties. In some boarding houses, anonymous systems of disclosure support early identification of any concerns but this practice is not used consistently. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school follows safer recruitment procedures and the central register of appointments is completed and stored correctly. Appropriate checks and agreements are in place for any person resident in boarding accommodation who is over the age of sixteen and not employed by the school, such as family members of boarding staff. Arrangements for visitors, including delivery and maintenance personnel, ensure no inappropriate access. The school does not appoint guardians for pupils. [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 publishes a statement of boarding aims and principles that is known to boarders, parents and staff and implemented in practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Clear leadership of the practice and development of boarding ensures all houses are effectively managed. Staff have detailed job descriptions, an appropriate level of expertise and receive further training opportunities. Assessments of compliance with boarding standards are carried out carefully by senior house staff but these do not currently involve support staff. Academic tutors are involved in the supervision of homework so that suitable links are made between teaching and residential staff. All required records pertaining to pupils are maintained and stored carefully. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Systems for the induction of staff with boarding responsibilities are thorough. All staff have regular reviews of their boarding practice in line with the school's appraisal system. The role of spouses and other adult members of staff households

is made clear in the house handbooks. Pupils are supervised by suitably qualified boarding staff, whilst regular registrations and clear signing out procedures ensure the whereabouts of boarders is known at all times. At least one member of staff is on duty in each house during the night and boarders who are unwell are confident that they know how to get help. A clear policy to deal with missing pupils is understood by all. Residential staff occupy suitable accommodation and access by boarders to this is appropriately controlled. [NMS 15]

- 3.19 The school has an appropriate equal opportunities policy which is effective in practice so that no boarders experience discrimination. Boarders and their parents agree that the school embraces diversity, respecting different needs and customs of boarders from a wide variety of backgrounds. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 A significant minority of pupils indicated that the school did not ask for or value their opinions. Evidence during the inspection, including conversations with groups of boarders and minutes from meetings, did not support this view. A range of opportunities exists for pupils' views to be heard through committees and informal discussions. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The complaints policy for parents complies with current regulatory requirements and is published on the website. No complaints have reached the formal stage during the last academic year. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The school appoints prefects and heads of house who are suitably prepared for their specific roles. Duties are appropriate and boarders speak highly of the support provided by prefects. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20 not applicable]