



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

MONKTON PREP SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Monkton Prep School

Full Name of School	Monkton Prep School
DfE Number	800/6012
Registered Charity Number	1057185
Address	Monkton Prep School Combe Down Bath Somerset BA2 7ET
Telephone Number	01125 837912
Fax Number	01225 840312
Email Address	admin@monkton.org.uk
Head	Mr Andrew Marshall-Taylor
Chair of Governors	Mr Stephen Baldock
Age Range	2 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	343
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (198 boys; 145 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 11 5-11: 189 3-5 (EYFS): 54 11-13: 89
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 303
Number of Boarders	Total: 40 Full: 32 Weekly: 8
Inspection Dates	28 Apr 2015 to 30 Apr 2015

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) 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.

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 the boarding house 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 Rupert Blencowe	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Boarding, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Monkton Prep School is situated on the outskirts of Bath, Somerset. It is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged two to thirteen, comprising two sections in separate buildings, set either side of playing fields. The pre-prep, for boys and girls aged two to seven, was founded in 1957. The prep, founded in 1888, and from where the boarders are drawn, was initially for boys only, aged 7 to 13. It became co-educational in 1993. A senior school, Monkton Combe, is situated a mile away. The whole is a charitable trust managed by a single governing body. The principal of the senior school has overarching leadership, but the day-to-day leadership of the prep school is delegated to the head of the prep, who was appointed in January 2014. New boarding house parents were also recently appointed.
- 1.2 The overall aim of the school is to provide a full, varied and academic all-round education, based on Christian foundations. Within this education, the school seeks to encourage a personal faith that sets standards for life, foremost of which are high achievement in examinations, the development of individual potential, and a lifestyle that is based on discipline, respect and service to the modern world.
- Currently, there are 343 pupils on roll (198 boys and 145 girls). A total of 40 pupils are boarders (27 boys and 13 girls), including weekly and full-time boarders. Flexible boarding is available for one or more nights. Boarders share two floors of Hatton House, which is part of the prep school premises. The school has identified 82 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 65 receive support. Eighteen of these pupils are boarders. Of the thirteen pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), six are boarders. Boarders come mostly from the local area.
- 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 2015.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that self-evaluation links more closely to boarding development and whole-school development planning.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken as part of an integrated inspection by ISI in May 2012. The recommendation relating to boarding, which was to increase boarders' involvement in the wider local community, has been fully met.

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 All boarders receive effective induction and mentoring, and particularly appreciate the allocation of a peer 'guardian' to ease their start. They also receive an informative boarding booklet. Boarders have a choice of adults and older boarders they can and do turn to, for support and advice. They have contact details of other helplines, and of an independent listener. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Care for boarders who are unwell is facilitated through the medical centre, which is staffed by qualified nurses during the day. Overnight, boarding staff, who are trained first aiders, can refer boarders to senior school nurses or emergency services if necessary. Accommodation for boarders who are unwell, including toilet and washing facilities, is suitable and separate from other boarders, with appropriate gender separation. Boarders can self-medicate after successful assessment, and the rights of boarders to give or withhold consent for their own treatment, when assessed as competent to do so, are respected. Medication is stored securely and appropriate records kept. Prescribed medication is controlled to ensure its administration only to those for whom it is prescribed. Boarders have access to doctors and other local medical and specialist services if required. The arrangements promote the physical and mental health and the emotional well-being of boarders. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 All boarders state that they can readily contact family and friends. With appropriate internet safeguards in place, boarders are able to make contact using their own mobile telephones, a house telephone landline, email or house tablet computers. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 All boarding accommodation is situated within the main school building. Boys and girls are accommodated on separate floors. The provision for boarding is appropriately risk assessed and well maintained, with action taken where necessary. Accommodation is clean, comfortable, well lit and ventilated, and the boarders take a pride in their dormitories and personalise their space. There is good access to adequately private washrooms and toilets on both floors. An appropriate space is provided for individual study and indoor recreation. Boarding accommodation is protected from access by unauthorised persons and security arrangements are unobtrusive. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Most boarders report satisfaction with the food. Boarders with special dietary requirements are catered for, and arrangements meet requirements for those who may need assistance through disability. Food is hygienically prepared and served in dining areas close to the boarding accommodation. At mealtimes, food is plentiful and nutritious, and offers choice and variety. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few boarders indicated that they are unhappy with the availability of snacks and drinking water outside of mealtimes. From discussions and observation, inspection evidence did not support this view. Inspectors found that reasonable provision of snacks is made, and older boarders may use a kitchen to prepare snacks in the evening. Drinking water is readily available. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Laundry is sent regularly to the senior school and returned promptly to the correct boarder, with suitable storage. Boarders are able to obtain personal items and stationery from staff. Boarders are provided with lockable cupboards near their beds and can also bring a lockable tuck box to school. Valuables may also be secured

centrally. Protocols for searching boarders' personal belongings comply with the latest requirements. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 The broad range of activities is balanced with free time, including time for boarders to be by themselves if they wish, using safe areas in the grounds. Suitable risk assessments are undertaken. A wide variety of weekend trips is on offer. Boarders keep abreast of the wider world by watching news channels, reading newspapers in the library and taking part in discussions in house meetings, where minutes show that current affairs are discussed. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 Comprehensive written policies are drawn up and implemented and meet all the latest requirements, to help ensure boarders' welfare, health and safety, and to manage any risk, with action taken as necessary. Premises are maintained to a suitable standard through staff vigilance and prompt attention. Staff are regularly trained in first aid. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Fire safety arrangements meet all requirements. The boarders confirmed that fire drills are held regularly, including during boarding time; all those with whom this was discussed were clear about what to do in the event of a fire. Records show that all required periodic tests are carried out, and training undertaken. Fire risk is constantly reassessed. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding boarders and promoting their welfare are implemented fully, according with the latest guidance. All staff, including the designated leads for safeguarding, are appropriately trained in child protection. Links with the local safeguarding children's board are well established, ensuring regular, helpful communication. Thorough records are maintained of any concerns. Policies and procedures are reviewed within required timeframes and involve the whole governing body. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Written policies to promote good behaviour and combat bullying, including cyber-bullying, meet requirements and are suitably implemented. Positive behaviour is encouraged, and pride in its achievement through each boarder's personal journal. 'Glimpses of Brilliance' are popular as records of positive personal achievement, contributed to by parents. Boarders report that cases of bullying are very rare and that staff are quick to act when they occur. School rules have been established and sanctions are clearly set out. The protocols for using restraint and reasonable force, and that for searching pupils, meet the latest guidance, in all respects. A few boarders reported the view that staff sanctions are not always fair. Inspection evidence, including discussion with staff and checks of records, did not reveal any unfairness in this regard. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Staff recruitment procedures are carried out meticulously. A centralised register of appointments maintains clear records of all the required checks and takes account of all the latest requirements and guidance. Safer recruitment training has been completed by relevant staff. There are no adults living on site who are not employed by the school, but documentation sets out procedures that meet requirements, should this change. Appropriate arrangements ensure that visitors do not have unsupervised access to boarders or their accommodation. Parents of boarders from overseas make their own arrangements for 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 statement of boarding principles and practice is fully reflected in practice and is readily available to parents and staff. Parents expressed strong support in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire for the school's arrangements. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Governors monitor and take any necessary action on all aspects of boarding through regular visits, discussions, reports and checks. This helps to ensure that both the leadership and management of the boarding provision are clear. It also helps to maintain full compliance with all the latest National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. The monitoring ensures that all the required boarding records are maintained and appropriate procedures followed. The new leadership is focused on the development of boarding and has begun to evaluate all aspects in a systematic way. As yet, this evaluation does not feed fully into the school development plan. All staff with responsibilities in boarding and other academic staff meet regularly, formally and informally, to ensure effective links in support of boarders' academic progress and personal development. They ensure that a comprehensive programme to ensure boarders' well-being is delivered is actively promoted. Boarding staff are suitably experienced for their roles, with good skills and knowledge, and further training is regular. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All staff involved in boarding, including volunteers, have appropriate job descriptions and receive induction training in boarding on appointment. Established systems of staff appraisal include aspects of boarding. Regular further opportunities are provided for training. Suitably qualified and experienced staff are actively engaged in boarders' activities, and supervise the boarders at all times, in sufficient numbers. Graduate assistants also play a key part in the effective running of the boarding house, and their roles are regularly reviewed. It is always clear that a senior member of staff is in charge. Staff know the whereabouts of boarders through regular registration processes, including signing in and out. They are aware of the procedures to follow should a boarder go missing, and these procedures cover all requirements. Sufficient staff sleep in the boarding house at night, and boarders always know where to find the member of staff on duty. Contact through a night bell is understood by boarders. Residential staff have suitable accommodation that is appropriately separated from the boarders' facilities. Boarders' access to staff accommodation is appropriately supervised and meets all requirements. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Staff demonstrate that discrimination on any grounds is not acceptable. Equality and understanding are carefully promoted for all pupils, for instance through different cultural celebration events. Boarders with SEND or EAL and those with sporting or academic talents are all individually supported with sensitive care. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In response to the questionnaire, a few boarders indicated that their views are not sought or responded to. Inspectors found that weekly house meetings, food committee meetings and regular surveys all seek boarders' views and action is taken on their requests. The open and relaxed atmosphere ensures that boarders feel they are not penalised if they raise a concern in good faith. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 All parents who responded to the questionnaire would recommend the school to other parents. A complaints policy is available on the school's website for parents to access, and its procedures meet requirements. A suitable system is in place to record and identify any complaints that are related specifically to boarding. [NMS 18]

- 3.22 Boarding prefects are trained before appointment and regularly thereafter, and their work is appropriately supervised by staff to ensure that there is no abuse of the role. Other boarders respect the prefects and find them helpful and supportive. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not make use of lodgings for its boarders. [NMS 20]