



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

MILTON ABBEY SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Milton Abbey School

Full Name of School	Milton Abbey School
DfE Number	835/6015
Registered Charity Number	306318
Address	Milton Abbey School Milton Abbey School Blandford Forum Dorset DT11 0BZ
Telephone Number	01258 880484
Fax Number	01258 881194
Email Address	hmpa@miltonabbey.co.uk
Head	Mr Gareth Doodes
Chair of Governors	Mr James Barnes
Age Range	13 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	206
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (177 boys; 29 girls)
Numbers by Age	13-18: 206
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 11
Number of Boarders	Total: 195
	Full: 195 Weekly: 0
Inspection dates	11 Mar 2013 to 13 Mar 2013

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 December 2009 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 Maureen Bradley

Reporting Inspector

Mr Peter Last

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

Mrs Linda Smallwood

Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Deputy Head, GSA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Milton Abbey is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged from 13 to 18. It aims to celebrate excellence, hard work, industry and endeavour. It strives to find a spark which will light a passion in every pupil whether in academic, sporting or artistic pursuits, and to engender a sense of pride in teamwork and individual performance. Christian values form the backbone of the school's philosophy, although the school welcomes pupils from other faiths or none. The school is administered by a governing body called the Council.
- 1.2 The Abbey building dates back to the tenth century and the school was founded on the estate in 1953 as a school for boys. The school began to accept girls into the sixth-form in 2005, and in 2012 co-education was introduced throughout all age groups starting in Year 9. Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of changes in the boarding provision and a new head was appointed in 2010. The school has built two new boarding houses and renovated and expanded three others. Social accommodation has been introduced in all five houses and the medical centre has been moved to newly refurbished premises. The school has recently joined the Round Square Association of schools.
- 1.3 There are 206 pupils in the school of whom 195 are full boarders. The school does not offer weekly boarding. There are 28 girls boarding and 167 boys. The majority of the boarders come from the UK and are predominantly from southern counties of England. Almost a fifth of boarders are from a range of overseas countries. Day pupils travel to the school from the local area. The pupils are from a range of professional family backgrounds. The school has identified 113 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and a range of support is offered to 84 pupils depending on their needs. Two pupils have a statement of special needs. There are 19 pupils who receive support for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.4 There are five boarding houses, one of which is for girls. Three of the houses are in the main school building and two others are close by on the school site. The deputy head is in charge of boarding and is supported by the housemasters in charge of each house.
- 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 school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Senior School

School	NC name
Third Form	Year 9
Fourth Form	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower sixth	Year 12
Middle Sixth	Year 13

2. SUMMARY

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.1 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure the temperature is sufficiently warm in all bedrooms and washrooms during the winter months.
2. Ensure that all windows have suitable restrictors fitted.
3. Ensure all shower facilities are maintained in good order and offer suitable privacy.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in December 2009 and all the recommendations have been implemented. Incidents of bullying are now recorded and monitored and all pupils have access to telephones offering privacy. Records of fire evacuations are evaluated and a rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment is being carried out. New boarding houses and the refurbishment of the old houses have provided suitable communal and recreational areas.

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 Before admittance to the school all new pupils receive a handbook with relevant details and procedures. New boarders arrive in school a day before other pupils and are guided through the procedures by house staff. They have the opportunity to make friends through a variety of planned activities. The school has trained peer mentors in the sixth-form who are available to help with any concerns. Boarders say they have a wide choice of staff who they feel comfortable in approaching if they have a concern or require guidance. In addition, an independent listener, a school counsellor and a chaplain are available. Contact details are displayed for those who can offer advice outside school, and for a number of help-lines. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The health centre contains appropriate accommodation, is run by a team of qualified nurses and has adequate levels of staffing. The school has effective policies for the care of boarders who are unwell, and these are implemented appropriately by the nursing staff and the boarding house matrons. The medical centre is well equipped and includes separate accommodation for boys and girls. A doctor visits the school twice a week and a female doctor is on call when required. Boarders are encouraged to have orthodontic and other specialist services at home in the holidays, but services are also made available in the local town. Prescribed medicines are suitably administered and monitored by the health centre, and self-medication is only allowed for boarders after they have been given guidance and are considered responsible enough to do so. All medicines are securely stored. There are a number of staff in the boarding houses who are qualified in first aid, and matrons give household remedies which are recorded both in the house log and in the health centre. There is appropriate communication between nursing and house staff; the matrons have received training from the medical centre in medical procedures and protocols. The health centre staff ensure that the confidentiality of boarders is respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are able to contact their families through email, the internet and house phones, which offer suitable privacy. Mobile phone signals are poor which restricts their use. The responses to the boarders' and parents' pre-inspection questionnaires report the difficulty of communication by mobile phones. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation ranges from single rooms to bedrooms sleeping up to four boarders, and all have access to a suitable number of washrooms and toilet facilities. A small number of shower facilities in some houses require a higher level of maintenance to ensure they always provide hot water in a clean environment and with suitable privacy. In a small number of bedrooms in some houses the windows do not have a suitable means of restricting their opening to a safe level because they have been removed by pupils. A programme to replace them is ongoing. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a few boarders reported they were occasionally cold in their bedrooms and in some of the washrooms. Most houses maintain a comfortable temperature but not all bedrooms are warm enough in extreme cold weather. The houses have spacious social areas and comfortable furnishings. Boarders are allowed to personalise their rooms and common areas. Each boarder has a desk at which to study in their bedroom. The boarding house accommodation is for the sole use of the boarders during term time and is secure from unauthorised access. Security arrangements do not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]

- 3.6 Food for boarders is adequate and is prepared in kitchens which are well equipped, clean and hygienic. The food is suitably nutritious and portions are appropriate. During the inspection no boarders were reported as requiring any special diets. There is a small choice of food at each meal. Fresh fruit is on offer both in the dining rooms and in the house kitchens. There is a suitable choice of drinks including drinking water which is clearly labelled. Boarders are provided with a range of snacks and drinks in the well-equipped house kitchens in the afternoon and evening. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Suitable provision is made for washing clothing by the school laundry and care is taken to ensure that boarders' own clothes are safely returned to them. Bedding is changed and washed weekly. In addition, facilities are available in all houses for boarders to do their own laundry and ironing if they wish. Opportunities are provided to enable boarders to purchase toiletries and stationery from the porters lodge during the week, and a tuck shop provides drinks and snacks. Lockable furniture in bedrooms allows possessions to be kept safe and private, and both money and other valuables can be looked after by the senior house staff. Houses run an in-house banking facility to distribute a limited amount of pocket money during the week. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders take part in a wide range of suitable activities during the week and at weekends. These activities are well integrated into the school day and evening. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, a full activity programme is mandatory for the boarders in Years 9 to 11, and the school expects that Years 12 and 13 will also elect to participate. In addition to Saturday school, an extra activity programme at the weekends also provides opportunities for trips out of school both locally and further afield. Parents answering the pre-inspection questionnaire reported high levels of satisfaction with the activity programme provided. There are many quiet areas where boarders can be alone if they wish, including the Abbey and the extensive school grounds. Television news programmes, newspapers and the internet enable boarders to keep up with events in the world outside. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 Appropriate health and safety procedures and regular monitoring of the arrangements keep boarders safe and protected from harm. Health and safety meetings are well documented and reviewed by governors at their termly meetings. One governor has special responsibility for health and safety matters. Risk assessments are in place and closely monitored to ensure a safe school environment and for visits and trips further afield. The necessary records are kept and scrutinised to ensure that any deficiencies are quickly remedied. All boarders, when interviewed, said they felt safe in school. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school has appropriate arrangements in place for fire safety. The recommendations made in recent fire reports have been implemented or the risks are being managed appropriately. Clear instructions and signage, together with regular drills, enable all boarders to be fully aware of the procedures for evacuation. Fire drills are logged and evaluated and take place regularly, both during the day and at night. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Due attention is paid to child protection. A designated person ensures that procedures are strictly adhered to and training is regularly updated for all staff. New staff are made fully aware of child protection procedures through their induction training. The child protection policy is in line with that of the local safeguarding

authority and is reviewed annually by the governing body. The governors' awareness is maintained through a governor responsible for child protection. [NMS 11]

- 3.13 The school makes it clear to boarders through its rules and behaviour management policy what standards of conduct are expected. The anti-bullying policy is appropriate and is understood by all members of the school community; it is implemented when required. When interviewed, boarders said they were not aware of any bullying in the school but understood what to do if it occurred. A small number of parents reported in the pre-inspection questionnaire that they did not think the school achieves high standards of behaviour. The inspection team found that robust procedures are in place and good progress is being made in combating any unacceptable behaviour that is contrary to the school's aims and ethos. The school has a suitable policy on the use of physical restraint, which is understood by the boarding staff. Arrangements for searching boarders and their possessions are clearly defined. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school operates safe recruitment procedures for the appointment of staff, governors and volunteers. All the required checks are in place and the central register of appointments is suitably maintained. Visitors are carefully supervised to ensure that they do not have unsupervised access to the boarding accommodation. Appropriate recruitment checks and written agreements are in place with all persons over the age of 16 who reside in 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 A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles is outlined in documents for boarders, parents, and staff. It is displayed in the houses and is seen to work in practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 A clear management structure for boarding staff has been established and job descriptions define individual responsibilities. A senior manager has overall responsibility for the line management of the boarding staff, and the housemasters have appropriate responsibility for the day-to-day management of the houses. Regular meetings of all staff enable matters concerning the welfare of boarders to be discussed and fully monitored. The housemasters have recently undertaken a self-evaluation of the houses and are aware of the importance of identifying areas for continual improvement. All required records are maintained, kept secure and are reviewed regularly. Day-books are used effectively by staff to record daily concerns about boarders and information is continually updated and communicated appropriately. All parents answering the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that they thought boarding is well organised and managed effectively. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Supervision in the boarding houses is undertaken by a team of suitably qualified and experienced staff, and levels of supervision are appropriate at all times including at night. Duty rotas are displayed which enable boarders to know who to contact when needed, although boarders report they are encouraged to contact any resident tutor if necessary. Staff with boarding responsibilities have an appropriate induction including training in child protection. The roles of other resident adults in staff households are clear. Accommodation for resident staff is suitable and there are appropriate arrangements for access by boarders. All house staff are appraised and suitable training opportunities are provided. The school has suitable procedures for boarders to sign in and out of houses, and regular registrations known as 'call overs' take place throughout the day and evening. There is close liaison between boarding

staff and other staff, and communication of any concerns is efficient. All parents answering the pre-inspection questionnaire reported they can easily contact staff who care for their children. There is a missing child policy which is known to staff. [NMS 15]

- 3.19 A high level of satisfaction was reported by both boarders and parents regarding the extra help given to those requiring support for SEND and EAL. Boarders reported that they are all treated equally and have observed no inappropriate discrimination. Boarding staff ensure that due attention is paid to the cultural needs and customs of boarders from varying ethnic backgrounds. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 There is a range of opportunities provided for boarders to express their views, to make suggestions or to share their concerns. A school council, food committee and house meetings all enable pupils to formally express concerns; pupils report that they are encouraged to report any issues to house staff as soon as they arise. A number of changes to food, resources and procedures have resulted from the various committees and meetings. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 A clear complaints procedure is available for all parents of pupils in the school and concerns and complaints are handled and recorded appropriately. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 There is a prefect system comprising Year 13 pupils called 'Pilots', and Year 12 house prefects are called 'White Stripes'. They all have appropriate responsibilities for which they receive suitable training. They have no authority to give sanctions and are used to support the house staff in their duties. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for any of its boarders. [NMS 20 not applicable]