



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

GRESHAM'S PREP SCHOOL

BOARDING WELFARE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Gresham's Prep School

The senior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	Gresham's Prep School		
DfE Number	926/6003		
Registered Charity Number	1105500		
Address	Gresham's Prep School Holt Norfolk NR25 6EY		
Telephone Number	01263 714600		
Fax Number	01263 714060		
Email Address	prep@greshams.com		
Headmaster	Mr James Quick		
Chair of Governors	Mr Andrew Martin Smith		
Age Range	3 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	314		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (169 boys; 145 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 173
	3-5 (EYFS):	28	11-18: 113
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	274	
Number of Boarders	Total:	40	
	Full:	40	Weekly: 0
Inspection dates	03 Dec 2013 to 05 Dec 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 June 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 chairman 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

Mr Paul Brewster

Mr Richard Balding

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (former
housemaster, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Gresham's Prep School is part of the Gresham's family of schools which has developed over the past 450 years in the town of Holt in Norfolk. The school comprises the prep and the pre-prep sections and has a total of 169 boys and 145 girls, aged from 3 to 13. The pre-prep section operates separately on a day-to-day basis in its own building. It has 96 pupils, aged 3 to 8, and includes the Early Years Foundation Stage. The prep section has 218 pupils aged from 8 to 13, of whom 40 are full boarders and 33 pupils are occasional boarders.
- 1.2 A girls' and a boys' boarding house provide social facilities for all pupils during the day and sleeping and recreational facilities for boarders during boarding time. The school makes some use of senior school facilities including pitches, the sports hall and swimming pool, the chapel and the Auden Theatre. Gresham's School is a charitable trust and the schools share the same governing body. All governors are also trustees. There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a happy, caring, inclusive and vibrant environment where pupils are enthused and confident about learning. It seeks to develop the skills that pupils need to achieve their potential at school and in later life, and to foster pupils' self-respect, and sense of duty to their peers, their community and the wider world.
- 1.4 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. Improve the fabric and physical arrangements in the ground floor toilet area of the boys' house.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in June 2009. Recommendations made concerning medical matters have been fully met. All boarding staff now receive annual reviews of their practice and new staff are suitably checked on appointment.

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 are supported. The pupil handbook outlines routines and contains helpful advice. Boarders feel confident about approaching members of staff to share their worries and they are aware of helpline numbers, which are clearly displayed. The independent listener is available, visits the school regularly and boarders know how to make contact with her. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The house parents and matron are trained in first aid and provide medical and health care for the boarders. Detailed records on the administration of medication to pupils are kept and effectively communicated. Medicines are stored securely and only administered by matron or the house parents. Boarders who are unwell generally go home. Those who are unable to do so or who are more seriously ill, are cared for in the medical centre in the senior school and boarders receive medical treatment off-site from doctors, dentists and other medical practitioners when necessary. Boarders' rights to confidentiality are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are readily able to contact their families. They have access to a payphone and the house parent's phone and in the evenings they are permitted their own mobile phones, as well as access to email and on-line video calls. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation is homely with appropriate segregation for boys and girls. Each dormitory has pin boards for the children to personalise their own area. Recreation areas are well used during the evenings with activities ranging from DVDs or board games to simply socialising with friends. Suitable washing and toilet facilities are provided in both houses, although the ground-floor toilets in the boys' house are in need of refurbishment. Curtains surround individual showers providing privacy. The boarding accommodation is reserved solely for the use of boarders. Closed circuit television, used in parts of the school grounds, does not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Boarders appreciate the healthy and nutritious meals, hygienically prepared and cooked in the school kitchen. The catering manager listens and responds to requests made by pupils and provides a wide range of food at mealtimes, catering for all dietary requirements. Snacks are provided throughout the day and drinking water is accessible. Mealtimes are sociable occasions with pupils joined by house staff and those on duty. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Bed linen and clothes are changed regularly by matron, laundered by the school and returned directly to pupils. Trips to the nearby towns provide boarders with the opportunity to purchase personal items and tuck using their pocket money, which is looked after by the house parents. Lockable boxes and lockers are available for valuables. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A wide range of activities is available and boarders particularly appreciate the weekend excursions. Boarders have safe access to the internet, television and newspapers. [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 pays careful regard to its arrangements to secure the boarders' health and safety. Risk assessments are carried out for all areas of the school, including activities both on and off site. Facilities are properly maintained and there is regular, documented testing of school safety equipment. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Measures to prevent fire are secure and equipment is tested regularly. Fire drills are carried out during boarding time, including night time, and staff and experienced boarders ensure awareness of the procedures for those who only board occasionally. A number of staff are trained as fire marshals. All necessary records are maintained. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school's arrangements for child protection are monitored by governors and contained in an accessible and up-to-date policy that has regard to government guidance, and is effectively implemented. All staff are regularly updated on child protection matters and are aware of what to do should there be a concern about a boarder's welfare. Two trained child protection officers maintain close links with the boarding staff to share any pastoral concerns. Boarders state that they feel safe and very well cared for. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school has suitable policies to promote good behaviour. Boarders report that behaviour is usually tolerant and kind, and that any disagreements are quickly resolved, with help from senior pupils and boarding staff when necessary. They say that sanctions are rarely needed, since staff regard misdemeanours as mistakes from which to learn, and they say that the school's robust approach to bullying prevents incidents in the boarding houses. Boarders take the opportunities for responsibility in the house seriously, and appreciate the extensive number of trips and treats provided as rewards for good behaviour. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 All staff appointments to the prep school made since the previous inspection have undergone the required recruitment checks. Visitors and outside contractors are suitably supervised. The school does not appoint 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 Boarders say that they feel part of an extended family where everyone cares for each other, in accordance with the boarding aims, which are clearly published and known. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The headmaster, supported by his wife and the resident houseparents, effectively oversees the boarding arrangements and the welfare of the boarders. Each house has a resident matron and the boys' house has a resident tutor. Two 'gap' assistants are accommodated nearby but off site. Boarding staff meet informally over breakfast each day and more formally every week. Written records of concerns and incidents are kept of boarding time. These measures ensure that boarders' academic progress and general well-being are effectively monitored. All the required boarding records are maintained and monitored regularly. [NMS 13]

- 3.18 Staff with boarding duties have clear job descriptions and the roles of resident spouses are made clear. A thorough induction process ensures that members of staff new to boarding gain the knowledge and confidence to work independently. Annual staff appraisal for all boarding staff sets targets and offers opportunities for professional development. Relevant boarding training is undertaken. The boarders are properly supervised in their free time and thorough registration procedures and regular roll calls ensure that their whereabouts are known. An effective policy on missing children is known by staff. The boarding community is sufficiently staffed by adults who are readily contactable at night, living in self-contained flats that are only accessed by boarders under supervision. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 The school's inclusive ethos ensures that boarders do not experience discrimination. Boarding staff are aware of individual needs and ensure that all are included in activities and supported sensitively. Boarders report that they are extremely happy with their boarding experience. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Boarding surveys, a boarding council and an effective school council with boarders represented allow boarders to offer their views. They are confident that they can raise issues or concerns informally with staff. When asked, they say that these mechanisms are effective and that they have resulted in visible improvements. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school publishes a suitable complaints procedure for parents that complies with regulations and keeps the required records. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire parents reported that they were satisfied with the school's handling of any concerns. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Responsibilities in the boarding community are shared amongst the senior boarders, school and house prefects, as well as dormitory captains. Clearly defined tasks are given to these children. They are expected to be good role models, supporting new and younger boarders. Informal training and appropriate supervision are provided. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]