



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WELLOW HOUSE SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Wellow House School

Full Name of School	Wellow House School
DfE Number	891/6013
EYFS Number	EY241527
Registered Charity Number	528234
Address	Wellow House School Wellow Newark Nottinghamshire NG22 0EA
Telephone Number	01623 861054
Fax Number	01623 836665
Email Address	wellowhouse@btinternet.com
Head	Mr Peter Cook
Chair of Governors	Mr John Pearce
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	134
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (76 boys; 58 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 33 5-11: 86 11-18: 15
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 124
Number of Boarders	Total: 10 Full: 0 Part: 10
Heads of EYFS Setting	Mrs Joanna Crook, Miss Kirsty Lamb
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	29 May 2012 to 31 May 2012

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. 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 under Children's social care/Boarding School.

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.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with boarders, held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed an extra-curricular activity and an assembly that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited each of the boarding areas 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 David Defoe

Reporting Inspector

Mr Anthony Hobson

Team Inspector for Boarding (Housemaster, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Wellow House School was founded in 1971, supported by an educational trust, as a school for boys aged seven to thirteen. Since 1985, it has been a co-educational, day school for pupils aged from three to thirteen, with older pupils having the possibility of boarding for some nights during the week. The school has a board of governors, and the present headmaster was appointed in 2004.
- 1.2 The school is centred on a Victorian mansion situated in extensive grounds in Sherwood Forest. The boarding facilities for boys are located on the first floor of the main building and those for girls are on the first floor of a separate building. Both boarding areas have three bedrooms for boarders as well as sitting rooms, showers, toilets and staff accommodation. The surgery is located in the main building. All the recreational facilities of the school are available to the boarders.
- 1.3 The school currently has 134 pupils, of whom nearly half are girls. Sixty-two pupils are in the pre-preparatory department which includes Years 1 and 2. In the prep school, there are 72 pupils. Ten pupils are flexi-boarders. The average class size is thirteen. Most pupils join the prep school at a young age, typically coming from the school's pre-preparatory department or joining at seven or eight years of age, but pupils can enter at any age if places are available. Entry to the school is by informal assessment of the pupils, to ensure that they will benefit from the education offered. Pupils usually continue until the age of thirteen before proceeding to a wide range of independent day and boarding schools.
- 1.4 Many pupils come from professional or farming families, living within 20 miles of the school. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage with a few from minority ethnic groups in each year group. Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom one receives individual specialist support through the aid of an interpreter. Fifteen pupils are receiving Individual specialist help for their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has a statement of special educational need.
- 1.5 The school aims to make the most of each pupil's academic potential, to develop the talents of each individual, and to educate pupils in good citizenship. It seeks to achieve these aims through a family atmosphere with close rapport between teachers and pupils, aided by an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and flexible boarding arrangements.
- 1.6 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 does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, and therefore it must:
- ensure that the statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is made known to all who board [National Minimum Standard 1, under the Leadership and Management of the Boarding Provision].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve the professional development of boarding and medical staff by attendance at in-service training courses.
 2. Ensure that all the medication and first-aid treatment administered during the school day and boarding time is recorded centrally.
 3. Store sufficient medical and first aid supplies in locked cupboards in both the surgery and the girls' sitting room.
 4. Ensure fire practices cover a greater range of times, including at night, and include alternative escape routes.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

- 2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in June 2009. It recommended that the school make improvements in their policies on child protection, safety and complaints, and improve the leadership of the boarding by including staff appraisal and governor oversight. The school has made good progress in attending to all these matters. The replacement of some mattresses, recommended by Ofsted, is planned for later this year.

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 Pupils who are new to boarding are helped to understand the routines of the boarding house by an experienced boarder or by a member of staff. Boarders have a number of staff that they can turn to for advice. The school's independent counsellor is well known to boarders and they know how to contact her, the children's helpline and the children's rights director, if they have concerns. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Boarders who are unwell or injured go to the secretaries' office where medical and first-aid supplies are kept. The surgery and the girls' sitting room contain wash basins, but medical supplies are not stored in these two areas where treatment often needs to take place. The surgery acts as the sick room and has four beds and a nearby toilet. Separate records of medication administered to individuals, during the day and at night, are kept by the matron and by the head of boarding. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders can easily contact family members, using private access to telephones. Video conference calls and emails are available for those who board for a number of consecutive nights. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Maintenance and upgrading of boarding accommodation occurs every year, and redecoration has taken place recently. Double glazing has been installed in the girls' areas and the washroom facilities for boys have been modernised. Each boarder has a locker for private possessions, but these are little used at present. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Facilities for the preparation of food are clean and hygienic. The nutritious, well-prepared meals are popular with most children; alternatives are provided for those with special requirements. Fruit, biscuits and drinks are provided in the breaks during the day, and a cooked supper at 5pm is followed by late evening snacks and drinks. The breakfast cooked on Saturdays to individual requests is a favourite. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Clean bed linen is provided each day or as required, and those who stay for a number of nights have clean underwear, socks and shirts each day. Boarders are discouraged from bringing valuable items to school, but these can be stored securely by the house parents. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 All boarders are engaged in the evening activities available after supper; these are also available to day pupils. On Saturday mornings, a range of activities is attended by all the older pupils, unless they have activities in one of the local clubs. Newspapers and a current affairs quiz each week keep boarders informed about events in the world. [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 takes a careful and thorough approach to safety. It has detailed risk assessments, for all aspects of safety, including trips away from the school, and these arrangements are overseen by an external agency. A governor attends the school's health and safety committee meetings. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Regular checks are made of fire equipment. Fire drills are held every term to ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of procedures during the day, but they do not practice with a route blocked to simulate a real fire. Fire drills have also taken place during the evenings but not during the night. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The child protection officer is appropriately trained and all staff receive regular safeguarding training from an external organisation. The child protection policy has been devised in consultation with the local safeguarding agency. Concerns about individual pupils are handled sensitively and in accordance with procedures, with careful records kept. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Boarders appreciate the level of support and guidance they receive from boarding staff. The boarders enjoy the family atmosphere created by the staff and each other's company. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have recently tried boarding for a night and many are keen to extend this experience. The rewards and sanctions of the school day are rarely applied during boarding time; most misdemeanours are resolved without a punishment being needed. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The recruitment of staff meets requirements and the central register of appointments has been improved to include full details of all adults appointed in recent years. The boarding accommodation is not accessible to members of the public, and any maintenance is done during the day when boarders are not allowed into the boarding areas. [NMS 14]

3.(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision

- 3.15 The school does not meet all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 A statement of boarding principles and practice is in the prospectus and on the school website, but the boarders are unaware of this. A child's guide to boarding at the school is being prepared, with the help of Year 8 boarders. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The boarding provision is overseen by the house parents, and they are assisted by other staff. All members of the boarding staff are teachers or teaching assistants in the school, ensuring a strong link between each child's life during the day and when boarding. Boarding staff are suitably qualified and most have been in post for some time. School documentation provides clear guidance and highlights the strong ethos of the school. The records required by the National Minimum Standards are maintained and monitored in accordance with requirements. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All boarding staff have job descriptions and receive induction when they take up a position in the boarding house. Most boarding staff have been appraised, but some staff lack experience of other boarding schools. Roll calls are held during supper and after the evening activities. The school has a written procedure for missing pupils but this has not been needed to date. Each evening, two or three adults are

on duty, depending on the number of boarders. Boarders know which member of staff to contact during the night if they are unwell or have a concern. [NMS 15]

- 3.19 Pupils from different backgrounds are all treated equally. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 In addition to the school council, pupils are given opportunities to air their views informally and sometimes by a questionnaire. Pupils are pleased that their views have been considered carefully. Appropriate protections are in place to ensure that pupils are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 A clear complaints procedure, compliant with regulations, is available to all parents and pupils at the school. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Certain pupils hold positions of responsibility during the school day, but a prefect system does not operate during boarding time. [NMS 19, not applicable]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20, not applicable]