



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ORWELL PARK SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Orwell Park School

Full Name of School	<b>Orwell Park School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>935/6005</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>310481</b>		
Address	<b>Orwell Park School Nacton Ipswich Suffolk IP10 0ER</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01473 659225</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01473 659822</b>		
Email Address	<b>headmaster@orwellpark.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Adrian Brown</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Rowland Constantine</b>		
Age Range	<b>2½ to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>243</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (143 boys; 100 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	2-5 (EYFS):	29	5-13: 214
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>113</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>130</b>	
	Full:	6	Weekly 124
Inspection dates	<b>13 Mar 2012 to 15 Mar 2012</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing primarily on compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. 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 February 2009 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 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 assemblies. 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**

Mr David Bunkell

Mr Chris Ward

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding  
(Deputy Head, IAPS school)

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 SUMMARY</b>	<b>2</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	2
(iii) Progress since the last inspection	2
<b>3 COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS (NMS)</b>	<b>3</b>
(a) Boarding provision and care	3
(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding	4
(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision	4

## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Orwell Park is a co-educational day and boarding preparatory school for pupils aged 2½ to 13. The school was founded in Lowestoft in 1868, later moving to Aldeburgh. Following various changes of name, since 1937 it has occupied its present site in the village of Nacton, a few miles south east of Ipswich. The school became an educational charitable trust in 1967, with a board of governors who are also trustees.
- 1.2 The school is set in over 110 acres of woodland and playing fields, overlooking the river Orwell. It is based around a Georgian mansion, with more recent purpose-built buildings and facilities in the grounds. Currently, 243 pupils attend the school, including 130 boarders aged 7 to 13 who are accommodated on the two upper floors of the main house. Of these, a few are full boarders, but most stay for up to five nights a week. Since the previous Ofsted boarding inspection in 2009, no major changes have been made to boarding provision. A new headmaster was appointed in 2011.
- 1.3 The school's aims are: to provide an academically challenging, stimulating and fulfilling all-round education in which happy pupils can grow in confidence and self-esteem; to create a caring and trusting environment in which pastoral care is given top priority; and to motivate each pupil to learn, explore and develop a love of learning. The intention is to offer to all pupils the benefits of a school with a boarding ethos, and to develop in them an increasing sense of independence and self-reliance as they prepare for senior school. Year 8 pupils generally proceed to a range of independent, mostly selective, day and boarding schools.
- 1.4 The school has identified 42 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities; specialist learning support is provided as appropriate. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Nearly all the pupils have English as their principal language, and support is given as necessary to those for whom English is an additional language. The majority of pupils live near the school or in the surrounding counties of East Anglia, but a few boarders have parents who are based overseas. The pupils come mostly from families with business, professional or farming backgrounds. The vast majority are of white British background, but a small number come from other ethnic origins.
- 1.5 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 2011.

### **(ii) Recommendation for further improvement**

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure better consistency of décor and lighting in the boys' dormitories.

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

2.3 The previous Ofsted inspection of boarding made three recommendations that related to: systems of recording illnesses, accidents and injuries; verifying authenticity of referees as part of the staff recruitment process; and removing references in the complaints procedure to the Commission for Social Care Inspection. These recommendations have all been fully implemented.

### **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 Potential boarders can sample boarding, and are then supported by peer mentors and staff in an induction process when boarding starts. Boarders have many adults to help with personal difficulties or to provide guidance, and can contact two local independent people with any concerns. Contact details are displayed near telephones, together with national helpline numbers. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Any boarders who become unwell are cared for by a team of well-qualified matrons, who also provide first-aid cover, deal with medical emergencies and care for those with any disabilities or chronic conditions. A surgery, away from other boarding accommodation, is staffed at all times by one or more matron, and is adjacent to two three-bedded rooms, providing separate sick rooms for boys and girls. A doctor visits frequently, and boarders are taken to other health professionals as necessary. Care is taken when household remedies are administered, and prescribed medication is given only to the relevant boarder. Sufficiently responsible boarders may self-medicate, for example when using asthma inhalers. Boarders' rights and confidentiality are respected with regard to medical matters. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders can contact their parents or carers and families using coin-operated telephones, email or computer-based telephony, or by writing letters. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 All boarding accommodation complies with statutory requirements for premises, and is well maintained, well decorated and clean. Heating and ventilation are appropriate, and washrooms and lavatories provide privacy. Dormitories are adequately illuminated, but one boys' dormitory is lit by a single unshaded bulb, while others have lampshades that restrict too much light. All rooms are well furnished, with plenty of space. Sleeping, washroom and common room accommodation for boys and girls is on different floors. Every boarder is allocated a bed, even if staying only one night weekly. Accommodation for adults in the boarding house is separate. Bedding is colourful, and a rolling programme of replacement of mattresses and pillows ensures comfort. Boarders may adorn their personal part of the dormitory. Most girls have done this, but few boys have chosen to, and the school has provided posters or picture-based wallpaper only in some of their dormitories. Supervised study sessions are part of routines, and boarders may use classrooms at other times. Rooms for boarding are only for the use of the boarders, except the surgery, used for daytime first aid. External groups using other school facilities cannot enter the boarding house or have unsupervised access to boarders. The safety of the boarders and their privacy are ensured. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Food is plentiful and nutritious, and the three daily meals offer much variety. All dietary needs are met. Food is prepared hygienically on the premises, served within a buffet system and eaten in a spacious dining room. Water is available in the dining room, external drinking fountains are accessible and all cold taps in the boarding house dispense drinking water. Boarders cannot prepare their own food, but adequate snacks are available at regular intervals throughout the day and evening. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 Boarders' bedding and clothing are laundered at the school, with care taken to return items to the correct boarder. Boarders may obtain personal hygiene items or



stationery whenever necessary. Any valuable possessions are looked after by staff. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 A programme of structured activities is provided for boarders beyond the school day and at weekends, and free time is incorporated into schedules, when common room and other leisure facilities are available. The available indoor accommodation includes the sports hall. When boarders go outside, care is taken regarding how far from the buildings they may go. Space is available for any boarders wishing to be alone. Daily newspapers and other periodicals help boarders to be aware of events in the world beyond the school. [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 effective arrangements to ensure that boarders are protected from harm, with detailed risk assessments and records in place. All measures take regard of relevant statutory guidance. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 All necessary fire precautions are taken and records kept. Regular fire drills take place, including at times when boarders are asleep. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 Safeguarding the welfare of children has prominence throughout the school, and all statutory guidance is followed. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Policies to promote good behaviour emphasise rewards, but also include details of sanctions for the rare occasions when they may be needed. All procedures follow guidance and relevant legislation, and are clearly understood by all. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 All necessary checks are carried out when new staff or volunteers are appointed, and are correctly recorded in accordance with guidance. For adults who live on the premises but are not employees, written agreements with all necessary conditions are in place to promote the safety of boarders. Visitors to the boarding house are supervised. When boarders' parents live overseas, they, rather than the school, appoint local guardians for their children. [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 summary of the school's boarding ethos is distributed, including on the website, and inspection findings confirm that it accurately reflects current practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Staff with responsibilities to manage, lead and develop boarding do so effectively. Several teachers carry out regular boarding duties. Senior boarding staff are experienced, and regular training takes place. All requisite records relating to boarding provision are kept. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All adults working with boarders have job descriptions; induction training takes place for new staff, and for others training is regularly updated and reviews of personal boarding practice carried out. Several experienced staff are always on duty to supervise boarders in various locations during free time. A clearly identified senior member of staff is in charge at all times, and staff know the whereabouts of every boarder. The action to be taken in the event of a missing child is well understood by all. Several adults reside in accommodation on each floor within the boarding

house, and a bell-push system enables boarders to contact the duty matron if necessary at night. Boarders have no access to staff accommodation. [NMS 15]

- 3.19 Facilities for boys and girls are similar, and no discrimination takes place because of gender or for any other reason. The individual needs of every boarder are met sensitively. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 The boarders' forum and a pupil council provide opportunities for boarders' views to be heard. Pupils know how to complain or raise a concern, including through a dedicated email address or a note left in a 'worry box'. If something is raised in good faith, pupils are not penalised, regardless of the nature of their concern. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school's procedure for parental complaints is readily available, clearly sets out the correct process and is carefully followed. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Senior pupils act as prefects or dormitory captains to help care for younger boarders, and staff ensure that these roles are not abused. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]