



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

TRURO HIGH SCHOOL

BOARDING WELFARE INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Truro High School
DfE Number	908/6080
Registered Charity Number	3065772
Address	Truro High School Falmouth Road Truro Cornwall TR1 2HU
Telephone Number	01872 272830
Fax Number	01872 279393
Email Address	admin@trurohigh.co.uk
Headmistress	Mrs Caroline Pascoe
Chair of Governors	Mr Roger Hygate
Age Range	3 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	425
Gender of Pupils	Girls 3 to 18; Boys 3 to 4
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 24 5-11: 106 11-18: 295
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 378
Number of Boarders	Total: 49 Full: 43 Weekly: 6
Inspection dates	08 May 2012 to 10 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 October 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 senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and other 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 Elizabeth Coley

Mr Chris Wright

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding
(Assistant Head, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Truro High School is a boarding and day school for girls from the ages of three to eighteen and boys from the ages of three to four. The school was founded in 1880 by Bishop Benson and retains links with Truro Cathedral. It values the presence and contribution of members of other denominations and faiths. It moved to its present site near the centre of Truro in 1896. It began as an all girls' school, and at one point in its history welcomed boys into both its pre-preparatory department and its sixth form. Currently, boys are only admitted into the Nursery. The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors. The current headmistress was appointed in April 2009. Since the previous Ofsted boarding inspection in October 2009, the school has established a second boarding house and increased the number of international pupils.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 425 pupils on the roll, including 24 in the Early Years Foundation Stage for children up to the age of 5, of whom 5 were boys. There were 106 pupils in the preparatory school, Years 1 to 6, and 295 in the senior school, Years 7 to 13, including 55 in the sixth form. Forty-seven pupils are boarders, who reside in two houses, Rashleigh and Dalvenie. The school has an arrangement to accommodate two additional boarders for the purpose of practical convenience, who are registered for education at a local college. Forty-one pupils are full boarders, three are weekly boarders and a small number are flexi-boarders who stay one or two nights each week. Twenty-five are international boarders, mainly from Hong Kong, and a few are from Spain. Eleven boarders have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities that cover a broad range of needs, and include dyslexia. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Fifteen boarders are learning English as an additional language, of whom one is at an early stage of acquiring the language. For the duration of the inspection, Years 4 to 6 in the preparatory school were away on a residential trip, and so it was not possible to include direct observation of the younger boarders in the inspection visit, although their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were included in the inspection evidence.
- 1.3 The boarding aims are to develop the intellectual, spiritual, moral, physical and cultural development of each boarder through offering a strong academic tradition within the context of a rich curriculum. The school strives to offer an environment in which each pupil's individual gifts flourish by encouraging independent thinking and learning, self-motivation, accountability and service to others. It seeks to develop values of honesty, integrity and tolerance, and to send out into the world young adults who are adaptable, courageous and compassionate, with the confidence to respond to the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century.

- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the preparatory school and the sixth form and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Preparatory School

School	NC name
Prep 1	Year 1
Prep 2	Year 2
Prep 3	Year 3
Prep 4	Year 4
Prep 5	Year 5
Prep 6	Year 6

Sixth Form

School	NC name
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

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:
- provide enough wash basins for boarders in Dalvenie House [National Minimum Standard 5.1, under Boarding accommodation];
 - ensure that the necessary recruitment checks are carried out on all staff before they are appointed [National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults, and, for the same reason, National Minimum Standard 11, under Child protection].

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Hold boarding house and food committee meetings frequently so that boarders have plenty of opportunity to express their suggestions and concerns.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

- 2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in October 2009. The recommendations at that time concerning the training of all staff in child protection and the activities available to boarders at the weekends have been met. Staff recruitment issues, whilst improved concerning the recording of checks made, have not yet been fully resolved.

3. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

3.(a) Boarding provision and care

- 3.1 The school does not meet all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 The induction process for new pupils and their parents commences when they view the school and prospective boarders experience an overnight stay. Before they begin, pupils and their parents receive handbooks detailing the routines of boarding and these are fully explained when pupils arrive. A small minority of boarders said in the pre-inspection questionnaire that they have no-one to whom they could turn. Inspection evidence did not support this view: a full list of people whom they may contact should they want guidance or support is available in the handbook and on noticeboards, including details of an independent listener and national helplines. They also refer any issues to the successful peer-mentoring system, CHAT, run by Year 12 pupils who are trained for their role. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Any boarders who are unwell are looked after in suitable accommodation either by the nurse or one of the many staff who are qualified in first aid, so that medical care is available at any time, including provision for medical emergencies. Appropriate policies are followed and the nurse oversees the administration of all medicines, which is recorded appropriately. Risk assessments are carried out on those who administer their own medication. Medical records and personal information are kept confidentially, with the rights respected of those boarders deemed Gillick competent. Regular surgeries are held with a local doctor and other health professionals are consulted as necessary. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 All boarders, including those from overseas, are able to have daily electronic contact with their parents, and the school has two coin-operated telephones within booths. The school sensibly monitors the use of electronic communication systems to ensure that pupils are safe. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Accommodation for boarders is arranged in small groups of three or four in each bedroom, and single study bedrooms are available for the oldest. Accommodation is appropriately maintained and cleaned. The toilets and bathing facilities give suitable privacy, but an insufficient number of wash basins are provided in Dalvenie House for the number of pupils accommodated. Suitable furnishings make the houses comfortable, with common rooms containing televisions, electronic games and a pool table, kitchen areas and laundries. A lift gives access to boarding accommodation for any pupils with physical disabilities who require this. Staff flats are provided within each house. Boarders may personalise their rooms with their own chosen posters and possessions, and the sixth form pupils have appropriate areas for study; younger pupils study within the main school buildings each evening and at weekends if they wish. Access to the boarding accommodation is tightly controlled and security arrangements do not intrude on pupils' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, some boarders were critical about the food provided. Inspection evidence does not support these views. Boarders' particular dietary requirements are catered for; they are given three main meals each day which are nutritious, with water continually available. The food committee contributes ideas for menus and the catering staff produce themed meals on a regular basis, including the provision of some meals representing the cultures of pupils from overseas who attend the school. Healthy snacks are provided in the

houses in the evenings. Kitchen facilities for the preparation and serving of food are hygienic. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 Each house has its own laundry, and senior boarders are expected to be independent and launder their own clothing and bedding with support from staff if necessary. Systems for returning and storing clothing are suitable. Pupils can obtain personal items and stationery on the weekly shopping trip to the supermarket. The personal valuables of boarders may be handed to boarding staff for safe keeping if they wish. A small minority of boarders indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaire that their belongings are not safe, although this was not borne out in their responses during the inspection. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders also raised as an issue the number and range of activities and trips provided in the evenings and at weekends, which inspectors judge to be adequate. During the week, boarders are encouraged to be involved in a suitable range of evening clubs and sport, both indoors and outside, and to enjoy free time. Following suitable rules according to their age, pupils can go into the city centre if they wish and several are involved in clubs in the local community. Since the previous inspection, the school has increased the number of trips organised at the weekends. Boarders can make suggestions about places to visit or activities and they are encouraged to participate. They can use their bedrooms as a place to be on their own if they wish. Newspapers are provided in the boarding houses to keep them abreast of current affairs. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school does not meet all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The arrangements for ensuring that boarders' welfare and safety are assured are well organised, with risk assessments covering all aspects of school life and appropriate records being kept. All maintenance checks are carried out regularly. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school minimises the risk of fire by carrying out fire drills at least once every term during boarding time, undertaking an annual review of the fire risk assessment, and maintaining all fire equipment in good order. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The safeguarding policy is suitable in content and is implemented appropriately. The designated officers for child protection have undertaken the appropriate training, as have all staff, including support staff and volunteers, an improvement since the previous inspection, and effective links have been made with the local safeguarding children board. The governors have recently undertaken their responsibility for annually reviewing the policy and the efficiency with which the procedures have been carried out, but they have not rigorously ensured the completion of recruitment checks on staff before their appointment. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school has written policies to guard against bullying and promote good behaviour, which include the rewards and sanctions policy, school rules, guidance for physical contact and restraint, and arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions. All staff, pupils and parents have access to the policies. A significant minority of boarders in their responses to the questionnaire indicated that they feel academic and boarding staff do not treat them fairly in the way they give rewards and sanctions. There was no evidence on the inspection to substantiate this view. [NMS 12]

- 3.14 Staff recruitment has not always been carried out with rigour, with some required checks not undertaken on a few staff before they began work at the school. However, all staff have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau and all requirements are now in the process of being completed as far as it is possible to do so. A central register of appointments and records of the checks made are kept, an improving position since the previous inspection. The most recent staff have been recruited correctly. Adult members of staff households residing on site have completed written agreements to ensure the safety of pupils. Clear procedures ensure that visitors do not have unsupervised access to boarders or their accommodation. Parents of boarders from overseas make their own arrangements for guardians in the UK. [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 its boarding principles and practice is available in handbooks for parents, boarders and staff. This is reflected in the provision made for the boarders. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The head of boarding and all boarding staff demonstrate appropriate leadership and management, as seen in the self-review process, which takes account of the views of boarders and their parents, and the boarding development plan. Boarding has prominence in the headmistress' regular report to governors. Some of the boarding staff teach within school and the headmistress is also practically involved in boarding life, promoting effective links. The handover of daily notes about boarders when necessary enables an awareness of strengths and areas of concern. The boarding staff have undertaken training in areas of welfare and pastoral care, although have not yet had the opportunity to expand their knowledge of boarding in a wider context. All appropriate records are kept and monitored by the school and action is taken when necessary. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Boarding staff and spouses have job descriptions reflecting their responsibilities, are given induction training on appointment and participate in professional development and appraisal, although the system used for appraisal is currently being amended to reflect more accurately boarding management processes. Sufficient staff, including academic staff who run some clubs, supervise boarders in the evenings and pupils know who is responsible. Staff are aware of where boarders should be and know what to do in the event that a boarder goes missing. Pupils are able to contact at least one member of staff, resident in each house, during the night. Access to staff is generally only possible in the house office and not in their personal accommodation, except for the youngest boarders as a group. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Staff demonstrate that discrimination on any grounds is not acceptable, and evidence and observations show that they are sensitive to the needs of all pupils. Staff discussions and records about the individual needs of boarders are thorough. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Boarders have some opportunities to put forward their views and opinions, including using a suggestion or concern form, or raising them directly with boarding staff during house or food committee meetings. However, these meetings are not held sufficiently regularly and pupils do not have the chance to express issues on a frequent basis. The school has responded to several suggestions made, such as

allowing the boarders to choose the menu each Friday evening. Pupils can raise concerns and make complaints without being penalised in any way. [NMS 17]

- 3.21 The school's complaints policy is available on the website and makes clear the procedure to be followed. Detailed records are kept of complaints made. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The senior house has a head boarder and deputy, and the junior house has a representative; these boarders have the responsibility of encouraging team spirit and consideration for others in the general running of the houses. They have specific written duties which make clear that any difficulties that arise with other pupils must be passed to the appropriate house staff for resolution. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for its pupils. [NMS 20]