



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**CONCORD COLLEGE**

**BOARDING WELFARE**

**INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Concord College

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Full Name of School       | <b>Concord College</b>  |
| DfE Number                | <b>893/6020</b>   |
| Registered Charity Number | <b>326279</b>   |
| Address                   | <b>Concord College<br/>Acton Burnell Hall<br/>Shrewsbury<br/>Shropshire<br/>SY5 7PF</b> |
| Telephone Number          | <b>01694 731631</b>   |
| Fax Number                | <b>01694 731389</b>   |
| Email Address             | <b>theprincipal@concordcollegeuk.com</b>  |
| Principal                 | <b>Mr Neil Hawkins</b>  |
| Chair of Trustees         | <b>Dr Iain Bride</b>  |
| Age Range                 | <b>12 to 19</b>   |
| Total Number of Pupils    | <b>517</b>  |
| Gender of Pupils          | <b>Mixed (246 boys; 271 girls)</b>  |
| Numbers by Age            | <b>12-16: 226    17-19: 291</b>   |
| Number of Day Pupils      | <b>Total: 77</b>  |
| Number of Boarders        | <b>Total: 440</b><br><b>Full: 440</b>   |
| Inspection Dates          | <b>26 Jan 2016 to 28 Jan 2016</b>   |

## PREFACE

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) Regulations 2014, as amended. 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.

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 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, the chair of trustees and a representative of the trustee body; 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 Pamela Leech | Reporting Inspector  |
| Mr Alex Balls    | Team Inspector for Boarding (Senior Housemaster, HMC school) |
| Mr Stuart Corrie | Team Inspector for Boarding (Housemaster, HMC school)        |
| Mr Simon Leyshon | Team Inspector for Boarding (Headmaster, ISA school)         |
| Mrs Louise North | Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, HMC school)        |

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Concord College is an international co-educational school offering day and boarding places for pupils in Year 9 to Year 13. It aims to promote high academic standards in order to enable pupils to fulfil their potential, in an atmosphere which engenders mutual trust and respect. Founded in 1949, the school became a charitable educational trust in 1983 and is governed by trustees who form the board of governors, guided by a chair of trustees and supported by several committees.
- 1.2 The school is situated in a rural environment near Shrewsbury. Boarders are accommodated in 17 single-sex boarding houses on the campus, almost exclusively in single rooms. They represent a wide range of countries including the United Kingdom. The school offers admission at Years 9 and 10 and to the sixth form at Year 12. A significant number of pupils join the school in Year 12 each January, for a five-term course. A small proportion of pupils leave the school at the end of Year 11.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the dining hall has been remodelled and extended. Several boarding houses have been fully refurbished and the school has recently commenced the construction of a new boarding house. Senior management roles have been redefined, supported by a series of new appointments. An electronic registration system for pupils has been introduced throughout the campus.
- 1.4 A total of 517 pupils are on roll; 246 boys and 271 girls, of whom 342 are in the sixth form. Currently 250 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), 30 of whom receive language support. The school has identified 32 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- 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 NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

| School | NC name |
|--------|---------|
| Form 3 | Year 9  |
| Form 4 | Year 10 |
| Form 5 | Year 11 |
| 6.1    | Year 12 |
| 6.2    | Year 13 |

## **2. SUMMARY**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.1 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and therefore it must take the following action.
- Ensure that the physical health and well-being of boarders is promoted by properly documenting all medication taken by boarders, and that boarders who are allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so [National Minimum Standards 3.1 and 3.4, under Boarders' health and well-being].
  - Ensure that the school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that standards are met, including maintaining and monitoring records specified in Appendices 2 and 3, and taking action as appropriate [National Minimum Standard 13.4, 13.8 and 13.9, under Management and development of boarding].

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

- 2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that residential boarding staff are involved in regular evaluation of the boarding provision with specific regard to the National Minimum Standards.
  2. Ensure more rigorous procedures to establish the return times of older boarders on weekend shopping trips.

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

- 2.3 The previous integrated inspection was undertaken by ISI in February 2013, with no boarding specific recommendations arising. All recommendations from the 2009 Ofsted welfare inspection have been fully met.

### **3. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS**

#### **3.(a) Boarding provision and care**

- 3.1 The school does not meet one of the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 Boarders receive a thorough induction programme when joining the school and are supported by house parents, tutors, senior prefects, and in many cases by a 'buddy'. They are confident in the range of staff whom they can approach should they need help or guidance. Contact details for the independent listener, national agencies and helplines are clearly displayed in all boarding houses. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has appropriate medical policies and these are mostly effectively implemented to ensure that the physical and mental health, and emotional well-being of boarders is promoted. Suitable accommodation for the care of boarders who are unwell, including toilet and washing facilities, is provided. The medical centre is staffed during the day by qualified nurses, and boarders are registered with a local doctor at a nearby surgery. Boarders have access to local health care facilities such as dental or medical services. Medication is stored securely in boarding houses and an appropriate number of staff are qualified in first aid. Prescription medicines are only issued to the boarder for whom they are prescribed. Records of medication are incomplete and inconsistent; some boarders take medication from home without informing the medical centre. No formal procedures are in place to determine which boarders are sufficiently responsible to self-medicate. The confidentiality and rights of boarders as patients are properly respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders are able to contact parents, carers and friends at appropriate times through the internet, mobile telephones and house landlines. Electronic communications are monitored with appropriate safeguards in accordance in school policies. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding houses are well maintained, clean, comfortably furnished, properly ventilated and suitably lit. Boarders are mainly accommodated in single bedrooms. Houses have sufficient toilet and washing facilities with appropriate privacy and many bedrooms are ensuite. Boarders may personalise their areas with posters and photographs, and are provided with desks for private study to support daily supervised prep sessions in the main school. Risk assessments for houses are frequently updated and maintenance issues are rapidly addressed. Access to boarding houses is appropriately restricted. Any use of surveillance equipment is not intrusive on the privacy of the boarders. The vast majority of boarders say they feel safe in their boarding houses. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 A small minority of boarders in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses said that they are not happy with the quality of food provided, and a few boarders stated that they are unhappy with the availability of snacks and drinking water outside of meal times. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Meals are nutritious, appealing and well-balanced, offering boarders a wide choice and catering for those with special dietary needs. Plentiful fruit and snacks are made available and boarders have access to drinking water at all times. Each house has a hygienic and well-appointed kitchen, and a central kitchen can be used by boarders to prepare their own food at reasonable times. There are no boarders with disabilities who require assistance with eating. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 The central laundry facility provides appropriately for clothing and bedding, and is appreciated by boarders. Boarders are able to purchase personal and stationery



items from nearby shops as well as during weekend shopping trips. Each boarder can secure their money and passports in individual safe boxes and staff will look after valuables upon request. Should a search of a boarder's room be felt necessary, it is carried out in accordance with appropriate guidance. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 A wide range of extra-curricular activities throughout the week and at weekends caters for the needs of all boarders, whether their interests are sporting, musical, artistic or cultural. The school provides a regular, much-appreciated coach service to and from Shrewsbury. Older boarders may return on the late coach on Saturdays, however no established protocol is in place for boarders to confirm their return times with on-duty staff. The weekly discos in the 'West End' café area are very popular with boarders, and the school campus has suitable safe areas for quiet reflection, private study and relaxation. Boarders may follow events in the outside world through the internet and television. [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 appropriate written policies and procedures for health and safety, and these are effectively implemented. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and completed for all areas of the school, including for on-site activities, visits and trips. Appropriate tests and checks are undertaken and suitably recorded. All risk assessments are effectively monitored through regular health and safety committee meetings with trustee oversight. Buildings, facilities and accommodation are properly maintained to ensure as far as possible, the safety and well-being of boarders. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Fire-safety policies and procedures are appropriate and effectively implemented to ensure the safety of boarders. A suitable number of staff receive training in fire-safety procedures and fire-prevention equipment is regularly tested and checked. Records are up-to-date and appropriately stored. Fire drills take place each term in boarding time and are properly recorded. Emergency exits from boarding houses are kept clear and outside lighting is sufficient and routinely maintained. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy which is effectively implemented. All staff receive annual safeguarding training and a copy of the latest official guidance. A sufficient number of designated staff are trained at the appropriate level and new staff receive a comprehensive induction programme which includes child protection training. Records are suitably maintained and stored. Positive links are maintained with local agencies. Older boarders with positions of responsibility receive suitable safeguarding and leadership training. Senior managers liaise with the governing body to produce an annual safeguarding analysis of policy and procedures. The review and implementation of the policy is undertaken by all trustees who form the governing body. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school implements appropriate policies and procedures to promote positive behaviour. Sanctions are appropriate, consistently applied and carefully recorded and monitored. The anti-bullying policy is suitable and includes cyberbullying, and examination of bullying logs and records demonstrates that instances of any form of bullying are extremely rare and are dealt with appropriately. Suitable policies for searching boarders and their possessions are available with clear guidance as to when restraint may be used. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Safe recruitment procedures are effectively implemented. Thorough checks are carried out and properly recorded on a central register of appointments. Spouses,

partners and other members of staff households who reside in boarding houses have suitable checks and agreements with the school. Visitors do not have unsupervised access to boarding houses. The school does not appoint guardians. Every parent responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that the school keeps their children safe. [NMS 14]

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

- 3.15 The school meets does not meet one of the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 A suitable statement of the school's aims, boarding principles and practice is recorded on the school intranet and is available for parents. This accurately reflects current practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The management structure for the boarding offers an appropriate system of care which is appropriately supported by senior leaders and trustees. Boarding has clear management, and senior managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. The monitoring of policies and documents with regard to medical records has been insufficiently rigorous to enable all standards to be met. Regular meetings occur with pastoral, medical and academic staff in attendance. Not all residential staff are involved in the evaluation of boarding practices with specific regard to the National Minimum Standards. Staff have an adequate level of experience and training, and promote the well-being of boarders. Electronic records ensure appropriate communication between residential staff and effective communication with academic staff. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Boarding staff have job descriptions reflecting their roles, and receive induction training and annual reviews. The role of spouses, partners and other adult members of staff households within boarding houses is made clear. Staff are offered suitable opportunities for further professional development. Boarders are at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff and are adequately supervised outside of teaching time. Staff know the whereabouts or how to find the whereabouts of boarders in their charge. They understand what to do in the unlikely event that a boarder goes missing. Boarders know who is on duty throughout the night and may easily contact duty staff or the night security team should they require assistance. Boarding staff have suitable accommodation and any boarder access is properly supervised. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders represent a wide range of nationalities and say that they do not experience any kind of discrimination. A sense of community is apparent with values of tolerance and respect at the core. Care is taken to ensure that the needs of every individual, including those with EAL or SEND, are met. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 A very small minority of boarders stated that they do not feel that their views are always taken into account. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Boarders are able to express their opinions through regular surveys, the student council and in the weekly informal house meetings. In discussions with inspectors, boarders said that they are listened to both in houses and in their tutor groups, and provided many examples of positive outcomes. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school implements an appropriate written complaints procedure that meets all requirements and suitably identifies any complaints specific to boarding. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 A few boarders indicated that they are not provided the chance to take on responsibility. Inspection evidence found many opportunities for boarders to undertake roles of responsibility, for example as sports captains, librarians or as fully

qualified lifeguards. Boarders who become prefects receive induction, support in their roles and appropriate training including safeguarding and leadership. Lower school monitors have clear responsibilities and training. Prefects and monitors may not issue punishments and staff oversight ensures no abuse of their roles. [NMS 19]

3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]