



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**READ SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Read School

The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>Read School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>815/6019</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY450853</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>529675</b>		
Address	<b>Read School Drax Selby North Yorkshire YO8 8NL</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01757 618248</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01757 617432</b>		
Email Address	<b>headspa@readschool.co.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Dr John Sweetman</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Peter Watt</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>231</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (135 boys; 96 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>3</b>	5-11: <b>53</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>21</b>	11-18: <b>154</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>196</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>35</b>	
	Full:	<b>27</b>	Weekly: <b>8</b>
Inspection dates	<b>28<sup>th</sup> April 2015 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015</b>		

## 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) 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.

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 governors, including the chairman, 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**

Ms Juliet Jaggs

Mr Harvey Trump

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Head, GSA school)

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

- 1.1 Read School seeks to provide an education that is caring, inspiring and fun and that challenges pupils, irrespective of their ability, within a supportive community. It aims to care for pupils as individuals and to promote their self-respect and respect for others in a broadly Christian setting. Pupils of other faiths and of no faith are also admitted to the school. Other aims define the values of the school with regard to providing a first-class education through a wide range of educational opportunities with the full involvement of pupils' parents.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1667 when the philanthropist Charles Reade established a boarding school for poor boys from the village of Drax, a few miles from Selby, North Yorkshire. The school became a voluntary-aided grammar school in the early 1900s and independent in 1967. Since that time it has been known as The Read School. Girls were first admitted to the sixth form and the pre-preparatory school in 1992. The school became a limited company in 2010 for which the governors take responsibility as the trustees. The current chairman of the board took on this role in November 2014.
- 1.3 The school educates 231 pupils, of whom 92 are girls. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) educates 24 children and there are 52 pupils between five and eleven years of age in the preparatory school. Of the 153 pupils in the senior school, 35 are in the sixth form. The 35 boarders live in two houses. The boys' house covers two corridors known as Norfolk and Selden. The girls' house, Adamson, is situated about a half a mile from the school. All current boarders attend the senior school some are from overseas including Vietnam, China, Germany, Kazakhstan, Nigeria and South Africa. Few pupils need support for English as an additional language (EAL). About one-quarter of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, the school has been registered to admit children from two years of age. A new deputy head was appointed in 2012 at the same time as a former housemaster took on the role of head of boarding. A new housemistress was appointed in 2014. Adamson House underwent a complete refurbishment in 2012 to accommodate a communal kitchen area for the girls, a quiet study room and an additional common room that can also be used as a cinema room.
- 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 2015.

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

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Centralise systems for producing and reviewing policies so that expectations for boarding staff are clearly known and consistent.
2. Analyse the evidence gathered during the monitoring and evaluation of boarding provision so that improvements can be more accurately identified.
3. Ensure all leaders, including the governors, hold boarding staff to account for implementing improvements and sustaining good practice in boarding.

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

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in February 2012. There were no recommendations in relation to boarding welfare.

### **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 A suitable induction process, when a 'buddy' looks after new boarders, helps them to settle in quickly. Other boarders make newcomers feel welcome during the increased number of social events arranged for the beginning of term. The boarders' handbook, in English only, is an adequate resource. Boarders turn to several adults for guidance including the head of boarding, their housemaster and housemistress, resident and non-resident staff. Telephone numbers for help lines, including the Children's Commissioner and the school's independent listener, are available in the boarders' handbook and on some noticeboards in the houses. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 A suitably qualified and experienced Medical Centre supervisor treats boarders who are injured and unwell in the medical centre. Boarders who are not well enough to attend class are usually accommodated in the main school. The location of this sick bay away from the medical centre is not ideal but medical staff frequently check on boarders in these circumstances and boarders can summon assistance via an intercom if necessary. Policies and procedures are implemented efficiently to ensure medication is properly stored and always administered by qualified staff. Prescribed medicines are only given to the boarder to whom they have been prescribed. Duty staff share the records of drugs administered to boarders efficiently to ensure boarders' welfare and safety. All records are handled in a sensitive and confidential manner and stored securely in the medical centre. The Medical Centre supervisor allows older boarders to self-medicate only after a careful risk assessment. Boarders have access to local medical, dental, optometric and other specialist services in the locality. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders contact their families and friends in private, using the house telephone or through electronic communication or their own mobile phone. Occasionally the unreliable wireless internet connection in the boys' house causes difficulty and an office telephone is available if necessary. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding houses provide separate accommodation for boys and girls. They are reserved for the boarders designated to use them and keypad locks prevent unauthorised access. Some recent refurbishment has ensured that accommodation is comfortable and appropriately furnished, and most boarders choose to personalise their own areas with posters. Boarders have decorated the communal areas as well. Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided but water temperatures are variable at times. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Meals served throughout the day cater for all dietary needs, and are of sufficient quantity and variety. A large majority of boarders expressed some dissatisfaction with the provision of food and snacks in their questionnaire responses. Inspectors joined the boarders for some of their meals and discussed the matter with them; inspectors found that food is generally nutritious but they agreed with boarders that choices are more limited at certain meal times. The catering team caters for individual dietary needs effectively and food from other cultures features in the regular themed meals. Boarders make good use of the kitchen facilities in each of the houses to prepare their own snacks and drinks. Drinking water is available in each of the houses. [NMS 8]

- 3.7 Laundry arrangements are efficient and boarders' clean clothes and bedding are returned promptly. Boarders are all able to purchase personal items from stocks held in each house and when they visit the local vicinity at the weekend. A small minority of boarders expressed concerns in the pupil questionnaire about the safety of their possessions. Inspectors spoke to boarders about this and most pupils agreed that their belongings and privacy are respected. Each boarder provides their own lockable storage. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders have the opportunity to develop their talents and interests during a range of extra-curricular activities. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure boarders' safety during evening and weekend activities. A small minority of boarders indicated in the pupil questionnaire that they are not happy with the balance of free time and activities available. Inspectors did not agree with these views. During discussions with boarders, inspectors found that the school makes arrangements for boarders to visit a variety of local and historic attractions but occasionally these do not appeal to all boarders' tastes. Boarders have an appropriate amount of unstructured free time. Religious observance is all completed in the local church. Boarders have access to modern media through the internet and television; newspapers are provided in some of the houses. [NMS 10]

### **3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding**

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 Boarding staff, and those in other departments such as maintenance, prepare and implement their own comprehensive range of safety policies and appropriate risk assessments which promote boarders' health and safety. These members of staff are unfamiliar with the procedures stipulated by colleagues in other departments because they are not aware of each other's documentation. This leads to an uncoordinated approach but staff communicate effectively within their teams to safeguard boarders' welfare. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Effective fire risk assessments are in place for all areas of the school and appropriate review procedures enable regular monitoring of fire safety. Fire appliances and alarms are checked regularly. Boarders practise evacuating the premises quite frequently and at least once a term during boarding time. These drills are conducted efficiently and the outcomes recorded systematically. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The named designated person for safeguarding ensures that all staff and volunteers are suitably trained and well informed about child protection and developments in local safeguarding board procedures. These expectations are included in the safeguarding policy and the school's practice is effective. The governors conduct the annual review of the safeguarding policy and practice in detail and collaborate effectively with the school to update documentation. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The ethos of the school contributes much to the strong relationships in the boarding houses. The behaviour policy incorporates the aims of the school and promotes pupils' respect for one another. Few rewards and sanctions are necessary because boarders are motivated to trust and support one another. Rare incidents of poor behaviour by boarders are recorded appropriately. Interviews with boarders and an inspection of records indicate that incidents of bullying are very infrequent but are dealt with by staff appropriately. Arrangements for searching boarders and their possessions are appropriate. [NMS12]

- 3.14 Recruitment checks are carried out in accordance with regulatory requirements and all information regarding applicants' suitability is held centrally. Appropriate supervision is arranged for visitors to the boarding houses. Appropriate checks are carried out for persons over the age of 16 living on the premises who are not employed by the school. The school does not appoint guardians for boarders living overseas. [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 statement of the school's boarding principles and practice places an emphasis on boarders' important role within the school community and as a united group within each house. This occurs in practice and the boarders thrive in an atmosphere that encourages mutual support as well as their independence. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Documents outlining boarding practice are available but they are not referred to often enough which leads to some inconsistencies between intended and actual arrangements. Nevertheless, leadership ensures that most routines are well understood through efficient communication amongst resident staff and day-to-day practice is managed effectively to create a calm and orderly environment in each of the houses. Recent developments have included improvements to the fabric of the boarding houses and some increase in the range of activities in the evenings and at the weekends. Senior staff monitor records of serious incidents relating to boarders' welfare to check whether improvements in practice are required. Other boarding practice is monitored frequently but informally. Findings are not always recorded systematically so they have not enabled priorities for development to be identified or inconsistencies in practice to be addressed. A representative from the governing body takes an interest in the boarding community and visits often in order to determine boarders' views and promote their welfare. The school makes a commitment to staff training and statutory qualifications are up-to-date. Some resident staff take advantage of the school's support for their professional development to improve their expertise in promoting boarders' welfare. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All resident staff have suitable job descriptions and new staff receive appropriate induction when new in post, and continued guidance and support from more experienced colleagues. Reviews of professional practice are both formal and informal which leads to some inconsistencies in the development of professional practice. Spouses and partners of adult members of staff understand their role within the house. Duty rotas are prepared to ensure staffing levels provide an adequate mix of expertise and experience. Boarders know how to contact staff by day and overnight. Appropriate systems are in place for monitoring the whereabouts of boarders at all times and staff are familiar with the procedures should a boarder go missing. Suitable accommodation is provided for resident staff to which access by boarders is appropriately controlled. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders from different cultures co-exist in a community which is sensitive to their needs. They have empathy for one another's situation living away from home. Most boarders understand that the distinctive features of the boys and girls' houses result in some slight differences in provision. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Most boarders have confidence in the boarding committee meeting as a means of expressing and sharing their views. This leads to improvements such as the range of menu options. A few of these developments are not always well sustained which accounts for the small minority of pupils whose questionnaire responses indicated

that they did not feel their views were listened to. Some boarders make a useful contribution to decisions about suitable weekend activities. [NMS 17]

- 3.21 The school has a suitable complaints policy but concerns are rare. Parents who returned the questionnaire were extremely positive about the provision for boarding and the way the school had handled their concerns. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The pupils who are appointed as heads of houses recognise the importance of their role representing the boarders. They are given appropriate guidance from staff and provide appropriate support within the houses, helping to organise other boarders and to maintain standards of tidiness. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-term lodgings. [NMS 20]