



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Marlborough College

November 2021

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School's Details

School	Marlborough College		
DfE number	865/6013		
Registered charity number	309486		
Address	Marlborough College Marlborough Wiltshire SN8 1PA		
Telephone number	01672 892400		
Email address	enquiries@marlboroughcollege.org		
Master	Mrs Louise Moelwyn-Hughes		
Chair of governors	Mr Giles Henderson		
Age range	12 to 18		
Number of pupils on roll	1011		
	Seniors 572	Sixth Form	439
Inspection dates	10 to 12 November 2021		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Marlborough College is an independent co-educational school. All pupils are boarders, accommodated in sixteen boarding houses. Founded in 1834, the school is now an educational charity governed by its trustees who are known as the Council.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, a new boarding house has opened and the senior leadership team has been restructured.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school was closed.
- 1.4 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.5 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.6 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.7 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than vulnerable pupils or the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home. Overseas boarders that did not return home received learning at the home of their guardians.
- 1.8 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades were awarded in 2020 and teacher-assessed grades were awarded in 2021.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.9 The school aims to produce well-rounded individuals who are academically ambitious, open-minded, adaptable, with a strong sense of responsibility for their community and the wider world, and who value diversity of all kinds.

About the pupils

- 1.10 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds from families living mainly in the south of England. National standardised data provided by the school indicate that the ability profile of the pupils in the school is average. The school has identified 140 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, of whom 71 receive specialist support. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Eleven pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive help with their English language skills. Data used by the school have identified 91 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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 specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2020 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2020 to 2021 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 In most respects arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.11 Recruitment checks on staff are not always carried out before staff commence employment at the school. This includes barred list checks; checks against the lists of those prohibited from teaching in schools and against the lists of those prohibited from management of schools; and receipt of satisfactory references. When criminal record checks have been delayed the school has not always ensured that an appropriate system of supervision is in place.

- 2.12 The school's procedures for safer recruitment, including systems for record keeping and accurate recording of data within the single central register (SCR) are not sufficiently robust to support the welfare of pupils fully. The school had significant difficulty evidencing the required checks. Not all requirements relating to the recruitment of new staff were met at the time of the inspection as the oversight of this process lacked an informed review.
- 2.13 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraph 9–16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 and NMS 2–4, 6–10, 12, 15 and 16 are met, but those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding], 8 [safeguarding of boarders] and NMS 11 are not met.**

Action point 1

The school must ensure that all required recruitment checks are carried out before a person commences work at the school. These include barred list checks; checks against the lists of those prohibited from teaching in schools and prohibited from the management of schools; and receipt of satisfactory references [paragraphs 7(a) and (b); 8 (a) and (b) and, for the same reason, NMS 11.1].

Action point 2

The school must ensure that when a person is allowed to start work in a regulated activity before a DBS certificate has been seen, appropriate supervision must be arranged [paragraphs 7(a) and (b); 8 (a) and (b) and, for the same reason, NMS 11.1].

Action point 3

The school must ensure an effective and informed oversight of the recruitment process, to ensure record keeping processes are robust [paragraphs 7(a) and (b); 8(a) and (b) and, for the same reason, NMS 11.1].

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.14 Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.15 The school had difficulty evidencing the effectiveness of its recruitment processes at the time of the inspection. Whilst many checks were ultimately found to be in place, the processes involved were not sufficiently robust to ensure the welfare of pupils, particularly boarders.
- 2.16 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 19, 20 and 21, and NMS 14.2–14.4, are met, but not all aspects of paragraph 18 [suitability of staff] and NMS 14.1 are met.**

Action point 4

The school must ensure that the recruitment processes are robust in order to ensure the welfare of boarders [paragraph 18(2)(f), and for the same reason NMS 14.1].

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.17 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education

and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

2.18 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.19 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school’s arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school’s academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child’s progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school’s website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

2.20 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.21 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

2.22 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.23 Leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

2.24 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils, including boarders. In particular, the oversight of robust recruitment processes.

2.25 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 (1)(a), (b), and (c) and NMS 13.3–13.5 are not met.

Action point 5

The proprietor must ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils, including boarders [Part 8, paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.1 and 13.3–5].

3. Inspection Evidence

3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and the governors responsible for safeguarding, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Stephen Holliday	Reporting inspector
Mrs Samantha Ransom	Compliance team Inspector (Bursar, HMC school)
Mr Roger Shaw	Compliance team Inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Neil Hampton	Team Inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Christian Kendall-Daw	Team Inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Ruth Loveman	Team Inspector for boarding (Former head IAPS school)
Mr Douglas Quinn	Team Inspector for boarding (Housemaster, ISA school)