



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Ardingly College

May 2021

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School's Details

College	Ardingly College			
DfE number	938/6200			
Registered charity number	1076456			
Address	Ardingly College College Road Haywards Heath West Sussex RH17 6SQ			
Telephone number	01444 893000			
Email address	office@ardingly.com			
Headteacher	Mr Ben Figgis			
Chair of governors	Mr Robert Haynes Brown			
Age range	2 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1067			
	Day pupils	731	Boarders	336
	Pre-Prep	123	Prep	316
	Seniors	366	Sixth Form	262
Inspection dates	12 to 14 May 2021			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Ardingly College is an independent, co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 2 and 18. The college consists of three sections: the senior school is a boarding and day school for pupils aged 13 to 18; the preparatory school is for pupils aged from 7 to 13 and offers boarding through the week. The pre-prep is for pupils from 2 to 7 years. The three schools share a 230-acre site near Haywards Heath in West Sussex. Boarders are accommodated in six houses on the site.
- 1.2 Founded in 1858 by Canon Nathaniel Woodard, it is part of the Woodard Corporation of schools. A board of governors, who are the directors and charitable trustees of the company, administer the school. The head of college has overall responsibility for all three sections of the school.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the prep school and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting remained open only for children of key workers.
- 1.4 No boarders remained on site.
- 1.5 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the children of key workers or vulnerable pupils received remote learning provision at home, or with guardians in the case of overseas boarders.
- 1.9 In 2020 public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades were awarded.
- 1.10 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.11 The aim of the College is to provide a 21st century education by being a forward-thinking and high-achieving co-educational school with a strong academic focus, excellent student support and a global outlook.

About the pupils

- 1.12 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds. Approximately three quarters of pupils reside in the UK. Boarding in the senior school helps to develop a global outlook with pupils travelling from 44 different countries, the majority in Europe and Asia. Day pupils come from the surrounding area of East and West Sussex. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average in both the preparatory school and the senior school. The sixth form is above average in ability. The school has identified 234 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, 127 of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 104 pupils, 12 of whom receive additional specialist help.

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. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. 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](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

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

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the prep school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2017 to 2019, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2017 to 2019 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and 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.
- 2.7 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.**

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

- 2.13 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.14 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.15 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.
- 2.16 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.17 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.
- 2.18 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 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

- 2.21 The proprietor ensures 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. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.22 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house, form meetings and chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with 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 Desmond Dunne	Reporting inspector
Miss Melanie Eaton	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mr Michael Clennett	Compliance team inspector (Former senior deputy head, GSA school)
Mr Carl Bingham	Team inspector for boarding (Director of boarding, IAPS school)
Mr Simon Detre	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, IAPS school)