



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**LINCOLN MINSTER SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Lincoln Minster School

Full Name of School	<b>Lincoln Minster School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>925/6012</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1016538</b>		
Address	<b>Lincoln Minster School Upper Lindum Street Lincoln Lincolnshire LN2 5RW</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01522 551300</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01522 551310</b>		
Email Address	<b>enquiries.lincoln@church-schools.com</b>		
Principal	<b>Mr Clive Rickart</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Linda Heaver</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>652</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (317 boys; 335 girls;)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>12</b>	5-11: <b>157</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>54</b>	11-18: <b>429</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>576</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>76</b>	
	Full:	<b>52</b>	Weekly: <b>21</b>
			Flexi: <b>3</b>
Inspection dates	<b>11 November 2014 to 13 November 2014</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) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. 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 March 2011 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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 members of staff, with members of the local governing body, United Church Schools Trust Board and with cathedral staff. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended meals, assemblies and 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**

Mr Christopher Sanderson

Miss Margaret Connell

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Retired Head, GSA school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Lincoln Minster School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of 2 to 18. The school was founded in 1996 through the merger of Lincoln Cathedral School, St Joseph's School and Stonefield House School, with a subsequent amalgamation with St Mary's Preparatory School in 2011. It is located in the heart of the city of Lincoln and provides an education for the cathedral choristers, both boys and girls, some of whom are boarders. Local pupils attend from throughout Lincolnshire and parts of Nottinghamshire and boarders come both from the UK and overseas.
- 1.2 The school is part of United Learning (UL), which comprises three charity boards: United Church Schools Foundation (UCSF), United Church Schools Trust (UCST) and United Learning Trust (ULT). It operates under the banner of UL and is governed by UCST. Senior executives of UL take responsibility for discharging the functions of governance on behalf of the board. The school also has a local governing body, which has delegated advisory functions in assisting the operation of the school, its chair also being a member of the UCST board.
- 1.3 The school aims to educate young people to the highest academic standard of which they are capable in an environment which promotes happiness, self-confidence, safety, respect and a growth in self-esteem. As a Christian school, it seeks to promote the teaching of Christianity and instil a grasp of spiritual values and the skills and knowledge needed to live and prosper in the adult world. The school seeks to identify talent in every child and enable them to fulfil their potential in whatever field is appropriate.
- 1.4 Boarding provision is in four boarding houses, three of them on the school campus and the co-educational junior boarding house, James Street, for boarders in Years 3 to 8, a short distance away. Boarding provision was reconfigured in 2013. Of the three on-campus boarding houses, Eastgate House provides accommodation for girls in Years 9 to 13, Lindum View for boys in Years 9 to 11 and Hillside for boys in Years 12 and 13. New accommodation, The Mount, was purchased in October 2014 and is intended to replace the James Street boarding house in January 2015.
- 1.5 Since the previous ISI standard inspection and Ofsted boarding inspection in 2011, Preparatory School accommodation has changed and now occupies two sites; pupils in Years 3 to 6 occupy the redeveloped former Stonefield House site and the former St Mary's site provides accommodation for Years 1 and 2 and the EYFS. The leadership arrangements of both the Senior and Preparatory Schools have been restructured and the local governing body has been reconfigured.
- 1.6 At the time of the inspection, there were 652 pupils in the school, with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. There are 223 pupils in the Preparatory School, of whom 66 are in the EYFS, including 43 who are part-time, together with 157 pupils in Years 1 to 6. There are 429 pupils in the Senior School, including 143 in the Sixth Form. Of the school's 76 boarders, 33 are boys and 43 are girls. There are four boarders in the Preparatory School and 39 boarders come from overseas and represent several nationalities.
- 1.7 The school has identified 70 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 31 receive extra support for their English, and 123 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 85 of whom receive additional support from the school. Eleven pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan attend the school.

- 1.8 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 2013.

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

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure consistency in the completion of forms for the recording of accidents
2. Extend the wearing of high-visibility clothing to those adults who escort children to and from the cathedral during hours of dusk and darkness.

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

2.3 The school has made good progress since the previous Ofsted boarding welfare inspection 2011. It has introduced a process of regular review with a senior member of staff and ensures the provision for training and updating in boarding practice for all boarding staff. A continuing programme of refurbishment of boarding houses has resulted in improved boarding facilities, including upgraded washrooms and the development of internet access in the boarding houses.

### **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 New boarders benefit from a thorough process of induction. They have a detailed handbook to assist their induction into boarding. Additional handbooks are provided for new choristers and new international boarders, who also follow an induction programme prior to the start of term. All new boarders are provided with guidance from a peer mentor, who is an experienced boarder. Boarders have a range of staff they can turn to for personal guidance, including boarding staff, their head of year or tutor and the school's medical staff. The school has appointed an appropriately experienced person with no direct association with the school as an independent listener, whom the boarders may contact directly if they have a concern. Boarders are aware of his role and how to contact him. His name is published on house noticeboards and in school documentation, together with contact information for the Children's Commissioner and other appropriate helplines. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The required policies detail the care for boarders who are unwell and are successfully implemented. These cover the administration of first aid and provision for boarders with disabilities or medical conditions. They also provide appropriate procedures for medical emergencies and the use of household remedies. These are implemented both in boarding houses and the medical centre; the boarders' welfare benefits from clear lines of communication between them on medical matters. There are small inconsistencies in the completion of accident report forms. The medical centre is run by qualified nursing staff and provides suitable accommodation for boarders who are ill or injured. It is separate from boarding accommodation and comprises a confidential consultation and treatment area with secure storage of medication, sleeping accommodation with appropriate gender segregation and adjacent washing and toilet facilities. Arrangements are made as required to enable boarders to access local medical, dental and optometric services and further specialist support as necessary. Full boarders are registered with the local medical practice. Clear procedures ensure that prescribed medicines are administered only to the boarder to whom they are prescribed. The school undertakes a risk assessment to determine when boarders have sufficient maturity and understanding to self-medicate and monitors self-medication closely. Staff have a clear understanding of, and respect for, boarders' rights to medical confidentiality, privacy and discretion. They respect the right of boarders with sufficient understanding to give or withhold consent to their treatment. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders can contact their parents or carers, families and agents with due privacy by mobile telephone and internet. A landline telephone is also available for their use. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The four boarding houses provide the boarders with suitably equipped and comfortable sleeping accommodation, ordered in the senior age range according to age and gender. The co-educational junior boarding house provides separate sleeping accommodation for girls and boys and communal leisure areas. Boarders can make use of facilities for private study outside school hours, both in the boarding houses and in school. They have suitable facilities for instrumental music practice and use social and recreational spaces in their own boarding houses and also on the school campus. Suitable toilet and washing facilities in each boarding house have due regard to health and safety requirements, are readily accessible from the sleeping accommodation and afford boarders appropriate privacy. Accommodation

used by boarders is suitably clean and properly maintained. Much of it has undergone recent refurbishment and provides appropriate heating, lighting and ventilation. Some of the accommodation is historically significant and, insofar as planning consent permits, the school makes boarding accommodation accessible to any boarders with restricted mobility. Boarding accommodation provides suitably furnished bedrooms and living spaces, which benefit from the recent refurbishment and meet the needs of the boarders. There is separate accommodation for boarding staff. Boarders' bedding is clean and provides sufficient warmth. Boarders can bring in posters, duvet covers and other items from home to personalise their own space. The boarding houses have suitable measures to restrict access to the accommodation to those authorised to use it. Other pupils may have access to communal areas with permission. Public use of the school's sports facilities and access to the cathedral do not permit unsupervised access to children or to boarding accommodation. Surveillance of the buildings and grounds does not intrude unreasonably on the boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]

- 3.6 A large majority of the boarders who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the food needed to be improved. However, inspection evidence confirms that, at both the Senior and Preparatory Schools, boarders are provided with a choice of meals which are balanced, healthy, varied and plentiful. Kitchen staff follow the UL guidelines on healthy eating and receive appropriate information about boarders to ensure that individual dietary needs are suitably accommodated. Dining facilities are conveniently located and school kitchens have modern facilities, suitably equipped to ensure the hygienic preparation, serving and consumption of meals. Boarders have ready access to drinking water and all boarding houses have kitchens, providing for the preparation of snacks at appropriate times and, in the junior boarding house, breakfast for its choristers and Preparatory School boarders. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 The school makes suitable laundry provision and enables the return of clothing to the correct boarder. Older boarders are encouraged to undertake their own laundry, according to a published rota, as preparation for university life. Boarders have suitable opportunities to purchase stationery and personal items. Younger boarders have escorted shopping visits and the bounds for older boarders include locations where purchases can be made. The school provides boarders with suitable storage arrangements for their personal possessions and they can lodge money, passports and other items of value with house parents for secure storage. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 A minority of boarders said that there was an inadequate balance of free time and activities after school and at weekends. Inspectors do not agree, judging that boarders have a suitable range of activities, both at evenings and weekends and appropriate directed and free-choice leisure time. They have suitable indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. In the school, a recreation room, equipped with games, television and a kitchen provides a useful additional resource to the school's sports and music facilities. Common rooms in the boarding houses provide further opportunities for activities and relaxation. The choral responsibilities of the choristers and the commitments of boarders who, for example, reach national levels in competitive sport are carefully managed to ensure that they do not result in undue demands on their lives. Cathedral duties are divided between the boys' and girls' choirs and younger singers have a lighter schedule. Through the provision of newspapers and periodicals and regulated internet connectivity, boarders have suitable access to information about events beyond the school. A tiered system of bounds, according to age and maturity, and accompanied visits, afford them appropriate access to local facilities. [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 a detailed health and safety policy, which is effectively implemented and is monitored by its health and safety committee and proprietor, who also provide support and guidance. Premises and accommodation are maintained to a suitable standard to ensure the health, safety and welfare of boarders. Electrical equipment is routinely tested, and due care is taken over the use and storage of chemicals and other potential hazards. The systematic assessment of risk contributes to the safety of the boarders, including on school trips and in transit between the school and the cathedral. Staff wear high-visibility jackets when managing transport at the school gate, but not when escorting choristers to and from the cathedral in hours of dusk and darkness. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school pays due attention to fire safety. Each boarding house and the main school buildings have a fire risk assessment and action points have been duly attended to. Staff responsible for fire safety are suitably experienced and equipment is tested on a regular basis. Fire drills are actually undertaken twice per term and include a termly drill at times when boarders would normally be asleep. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school pays due regard to the safeguarding of boarders, and arrangements have proper regard to official guidance. All staff have undertaken training in child protection at an appropriate level. Such training is also a feature of the induction of new staff and training for those responsible for leading safeguarding includes inter-agency working. Close liaison with those responsible for safeguarding at the cathedral ensures a complementary approach, clear communication and the sharing of training. Cathedral staff who work with the choristers, including adult choir members, have all undertaken training in child protection. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 The school has clear written policies to promote good behaviour and combat bullying, which are understood by boarders; staff undertake training in these respects. Pupils have an understanding of behavioural expectations and the dangers of bullying through lessons, assemblies and other educational elements. Record-keeping shows appropriate detail and is communicated efficiently to ensure suitable monitoring. Staff have clear guidance on the acceptable use of restraint and arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 The school operates safe recruitment procedures, vetting staff and maintaining proper records to ensure that those who work with pupils are suitable to do so. The school collaborates with the cathedral on the appointment of cathedral staff who work with the pupils and all such staff have undergone appropriate checks prior to appointment. Appropriate security checks are undertaken on persons over the age of 16 who occupy the same premises as boarders, but are not employed by the school. They have a licence to occupy their accommodation, which provides due guidance on their contact with boarders and specifies appropriately the terms of their residence in relation to their suitability to have regular contact with children. Boarding staff follow clear routines to ensure that all persons visiting boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised, ensuring that there is no inappropriate access to boarders or their accommodation. The school does not appoint guardians for its overseas boarders. It liaises with its parents to ensure effective communication between school, home and the guardians. [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 provides a clear statement of its boarding principles and practice on its website and in its various publications for boarders, parents and staff. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Clear leadership and management of the boarding life of the school include a suitable focus on the development of practice. The management of boarding is supported by suitable links between the boarding and academic life of the school and the high proportion of staff who work in both areas. Senior boarding staff are suitably experienced and all staff are committed to training specific to boarding, as well as in areas such as child protection and first aid. All the required records to support the welfare and progress of boarders are maintained and monitored by the school. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All staff involved in boarding have job descriptions, which provide for a clear understanding of their roles. New staff undertake induction in boarding. Professional development for boarding staff is supported by appraisal and review, which are pertinent to their roles in boarding. The roles of spouses and other adult family members of staff in boarding accommodation are clearly defined. They play a valued role in boarding and have been trained appropriately in child protection. The school ensures the consistent supervision of boarders outside teaching time, involving a generous number of staff in the boarding houses, in school and during the choristers' cathedral commitments and transfer to and from the cathedral. At all times, those supervising boarders are suitably qualified and experienced. Signing in and out procedures and the exchange of mobile telephone contact details ensure that staff know the whereabouts of boarders at all times and how to find them. The school provides detailed procedures in the event of a child going missing, which meet requirements and are understood by staff. At least one adult member of staff sleeps in each boarding house overnight and boarders understand how this person can be contacted, should the need arise. Resident staff are provided with suitable accommodation, which is appropriately separate from the facilities provided for boarders. Any access by boarders to staff accommodation is properly restricted and managed. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Both in the school and the cathedral, boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination. Boys' and girls' choirs have equal prestige. The care of overseas boarders and their provision for learning English are carefully monitored by a team of staff to ensure that they integrate well into their houses and receive appropriate support. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Although, in their questionnaires, a majority of boarders who responded felt that the school does not seek and respond to their opinions, inspection evidence established that boarders can represent their views to the staff in a range of ways, including through the regular food committee and boarding council meetings. On a regular basis, for example, groups of boarders take it in turns to choose the menu for the evening meal. The school also undertakes regular questionnaires to determine boarders' opinions and concerns. Pupils are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school has, and follows appropriately, a clear procedure for dealing with and recording complaints, which meets requirements. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Prefects and other boarders with positions of responsibility are given training and develop a clear understanding of their roles; they are appropriately supervised and

do not issue any sanctions, instead referring issues to members of boarding staff.  
[NMS 19]

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