



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

EDGE GROVE SCHOOL

**BOARDING WELFARE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Edge Grove School
DfE Number	919/6002
Registered Charity Number	311054
Address	Edge Grove School High Cross Aldenham Watford Hertfordshire WD25 8NL
Telephone Number	01923 855724
Fax Number	01923 859920
Email Address	enquiries@edgegrove.com
Headmaster	Mr Ben Evans
Chair of Governors	Mr Paul Haworth
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	338
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (215 boys; 123 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 54 5-11: 234 11-13: 50
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 284
Number of Boarders	Total: 54 Full: 23 Weekly: 31
Inspection dates	09 Oct 2012 to 11 Oct 2012

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. 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 November 2009 and can be found at 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 senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, 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 Jan Preece

Mr Alistair Telfer

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding
(Head of Department, ISA school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 SUMMARY	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	2
(iii) Progress since the previous inspection	2
3 COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS	3
(a) Boarding provision and care	3
(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding	4
(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision	4

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Edge Grove is a co-educational preparatory school for pupils aged from three to thirteen years. The school was founded in 1935 and is situated in semi-rural Hertfordshire, 15 miles from central London. Founded as a boarding preparatory school for boys, it became co-educational in 1999. The school is administered by a board of governors and a new headmaster took up appointment in September 2012. Accommodation is arranged in and around the original house, which stands in 28 acres of parkland. The school aims to provide a broad educational experience in which all pupils are prepared for a successful, happy and healthy future founded on decency, mutual respect, self-confidence, a love of learning and a commitment to the higher goals of community and a sustainable environment.
- 1.2 There are currently 338 pupils on the school roll: 215 boys and 123 girls. Pupils come mainly from professional or business backgrounds and from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Boarders come from the local area and London, and about one-third come from overseas. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. A total of 70 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, of whom 12 receive specialist support in school. Support is also provided for 4 of the 21 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Pupils move on to a wide range of independent senior schools across the country.
- 1.3 The school provides boarding on a full, weekly or flexible basis for pupils from the age of seven. Boarders may gradually build up their boarding experience from a single night to staying full-time. Boarding accommodation is located in the main house. At the time of the inspection there were 54 boarders, of whom 29 were boys and 25 girls. Boarding is overseen by a housemaster and housemistress, who are supported by boarding tutors and residential Gap Year students. The school seeks to place boarding at its heart, and aims to create for each boarder a caring extended family environment where pupils feel safe and valued in a homely and supportive atmosphere.
- 1.4 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 does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, and therefore it must:
- ensure that new staff do not take up appointment until a check against the barred list has been made [National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.2 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve communication between day and boarding staff to ensure that medical and welfare issues are shared efficiently at handover.
 2. Ensure that beds for the oldest boarders are appropriate in size.

(iii) Progress since the previous inspection

- 2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection that was undertaken by Ofsted in November 2009 made three recommendations. These related to planning for the development of boarding accommodation, ensuring regular review of the performance of staff with boarding duties, and provision of an individual completely independent of the school whom boarders may contact about personal concerns at school. At the time of the inspection, these had all been implemented.

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 Boarders are given a boarders' guide which explains key routines and, in the early weeks, allocated a 'shadow' boarder of a similar age. They have a wide choice of adults, known as the Circle of Care to whom they can go for guidance. Contact details, together with external helplines, are displayed on notice boards and in the boarders' guide. Boarders are aware of the availability of an independent listener. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Medical arrangements are supervised efficiently by a qualified school nurse. She ensures suitable treatment for boarders who require first aid, have long-term conditions or who are unwell. House staff have undergone suitable additional training to provide care at night. Medicines are stored securely and suitable records of treatment and medication maintained. However, house staff have no direct access to these, so administration of homely remedies may be delayed whilst they contact the off-duty nurse. The nurse arranges essential ancillary medical care for full boarders. The school has recognised that, although adequate, accommodation for boarders who are unwell is limited, and it is currently extending the sick bay. The boarders' rights to confidentiality as patients are respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders have access to two private telephones and video messaging in order to contact their families. Older boarders may use mobile telephones under supervision. All boarders have an email address and the school has appropriate safeguards to monitor their use of electronic communications. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Boarding accommodation is comfortable, clean and well maintained, and girls' and boys' areas are appropriately separated. Recently refurbished washrooms provide boarders with sufficient privacy. Some older boys raised a concern about the size of their beds and inspectors agreed that the bunks in their dormitory are somewhat narrow for their age. Boarders can personalise their sleeping area with photographs, posters and cuddly toys. Bedding, which is usually brought from home, is clean and sufficiently warm, and efficient use is made of limited storage space. Suitable facilities for prep include the library, computer room and a study room. Televisions and quiet play areas are located in the senior girls' and boys' dormitories. Access to accommodation is restricted to boarders and their privacy is not compromised by security measures. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Boarders, including those with particular dietary needs, are provided with varied and nutritious meals. The boarders' feedback is evaluated regularly. A majority of boarders who responded to pre-inspection questionnaires expressed dissatisfaction with the food. Inspection findings did not support this view. The meals seen and sampled during the inspection were healthy, sufficient and appetising. The catering facilities are suitable. Boarders have appropriate access to drinking water and an additional snack is provided before bedtime. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 The school implements appropriate laundry arrangements although a significant number of boarders say that they have lost items of clothing. Personal or stationery items are provided, when necessary, by the houseparents. A small minority of boarders have concerns about their personal possessions. Inspectors found that valuables are stored in a locked filing cabinet and that the school encourages

boarders to bring a lockable box for the safe keeping of small personal items. [NMS 9]

- 3.8 Boarders are very happy with the range of activities offered before supper and at the weekend. After supper and prep they have free time to use the sports hall or computer room, or for music practice or to play outside. A variety of activities are arranged on Saturdays and external trips on a Sunday. Boarders are aware of events outside school through access to newspapers, the internet and outings. [NMS 10]

3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding

- 3.9 The school does not meet one of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The school has thorough arrangements to secure the health and safety of the boarders. Risk assessments for permitted areas of the site and weekend trips are rigorous and equipment is inspected regularly for safety. Areas which are out of bounds are clearly identified and fenced off or locked securely. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school takes all necessary precautions to ensure fire safety. Fire drills, including some at night, are carried out regularly and logged. Staff ensure that occasional boarders understand evacuation procedures. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The arrangements for safeguarding and welfare comply with requirements. All staff are trained in safeguarding at the appropriate level and the school maintains useful links with local authority officers. All new staff receive appropriate training. Governors exercise their responsibility for this area carefully. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Good behaviour is promoted through the implementation of appropriate policies. Different rewards and sanctions distinguish boarding from the school day. Most boarders say that these are applied fairly. The school's suitable anti-bullying procedures are employed appropriately so that almost all boarders say that should any bullying occur, it is dealt with effectively. During the inspection, relationships within the boarding community were seen to be warm and friendly. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Current practice in checks on staff and governors' recruitment is secure, though in the past some staff started work before the required check against the barred list had been completed. The school has changed its recruitment procedures so that staff no longer start work until all vetting information has been received. An appropriate written agreement informs resident staff of their responsibilities and all visitors are supervised to ensure that they do not have unauthorised contact with pupils. [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 A clear statement of the aims for boarding is published on the school's website and boarding practice reflects these aims. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 The leadership of the school and other senior staff have appropriate boarding experience and close involvement with the boarding community. The boarding staff participate in weekly staff meetings where individual pupils' progress is discussed and welfare plans for boarders are shared. Effective communication and self-evaluation are secured through weekly boarding staff meetings. The new

- professional review system enables boarding staff to undertake external training to develop their practice. All the required boarding records are maintained. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 All boarding staff have a job description which reflects their duties accurately and they receive induction training when newly appointed. Boarders are appropriately supervised and duty rotas are clearly displayed, so that boarders know who is looking after them. Registration at key times ensures that the boarders' whereabouts are known and staff understand their role in the event of a boarder going missing. The handover from day to night care is not sufficiently formal to ensure that boarding staff are reliably made aware of any welfare issues that have occurred during the day. Boarders know how to contact staff at night and do not have inappropriate access to staff accommodation. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders say that they do not experience any discrimination. Their activities are inclusive and appeal to a wide variety of abilities and preferences. Appropriate learning support is offered, including for those boarders with EAL, and boarding care is sensitive to individual needs. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 Boarders may contribute their views using a suggestions box and through forums such as dormitory meetings and the boarders' council. Their views are given appropriate weight in decision making. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school publishes a suitable complaints procedure on its website. Records indicate that most concerns are resolved informally but that any which have been raised formally are addressed appropriately. [NMS18]
- 3.22 Prefects' duties do not include boarding responsibilities. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not arrange long-stay lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]