

# Downside School

Welfare progress monitoring inspection report for a boarding school

---

<b>DfE registration number</b>	933/6021
<b>Unique reference number for social care</b>	SC032399
<b>Unique reference number for education</b>	123910
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24/11/2011 to 25/11/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Lucy Martin / Clare Davies

---

<b>School address</b>	Downside School, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, RADSTOCK, BA3 4RJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01761 235 100
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Father Leo Maidlow Davis

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.<sup>1,2</sup>

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

## Information about the school

Downside is a Catholic co-educational boarding school founded by the Benedictine Community. Currently the school has a total of 425 pupils between the ages of 11 and 18, of whom 343 are boarders. It became co-educational in September 2005, and now approximately 40% of pupils are girls.

The boarders are accommodated in seven houses. A junior house for boys and girls is located a short walk away from the main school campus. In the third form all boys enter Powell House for a year before transferring to one of three senior houses. For the girls, they join one of two boarding houses in the third form where they remain throughout their senior school career.

The school has been in its present location since 1814 and stands within extensive well maintained grounds shared with Downside Abbey, a Roman Catholic monastery. The campus is in the village of Stratton on the Fosse, Somerset and is approximately twelve miles from Bath.

## Context of the inspection

This was the second progress monitoring inspection carried out jointly by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and Ofsted. The inspection was at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess progress made in implementing the school's action plan dated 26 August 2011 following a joint progress monitoring visit carried out on 23 June 2011. The date of the last full inspection carried out by Ofsted and ISI was 23/24 November 2010 concluding on 8/9 December 2010.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

## Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

Downside School has made good progress in implementing their action plan following the last inspection. There have been improvements made in safeguarding with a sharper focus on these issues through procedures and meetings and an increased culture of awareness among staff.

At the last progress monitoring inspection there were five national minimum standards (NMS) not met. These areas were addressed in the school's action plan and on this inspection the school presented evidence that it is now fully compliant and meets all the NMS.

At the last inspection, the school was checking to ensure that school nursing staff hold current nursing registration but this was not part of the centralized recruitment process and was not included in personnel records. The recruitment process now includes a check with the Nursing and Midwifery Council prior to appointment which is recorded in staff files. The Single Central Record detailing the recruitment checks undertaken includes the nurses' registration with expiry dates.

The school's child protection policy was not compliant but has been fully reviewed and now meets the NMS. The school was not implementing an appropriate policy on child protection and response to allegations or suspicions of abuse. In response, there have been improvements in staff training with all staff attending training. In addition, some key staff such as the headteacher and the deputy child protection officer have attended external training in this area. A training session has taken place for the school's trustees and further training is planned for the resident monks in the adjoining monastery, whether they have responsibilities in the school or not. Those with responsibility in the school have already received training as members of staff. Staff interviewed are fully aware of the child protection procedures at the school and there is improved communication and information sharing between staff surrounding these issues. For example, there are regular safeguarding meetings held which are clearly minuted with actions from the meetings clearly identified. Welfare meetings have also been introduced which are attended by the housemasters/housemistresses and head nurse which have resulted in some pupils having written welfare plans in place.

There are improved systems in place to record child protection concerns. The child protection officer maintains a central electronic log of all incidents with accompanying paper files in place. The records maintained are of good quality and evidence that appropriate action is taken, including liaison with external agencies as necessary.

The school demonstrates an increased awareness regarding safeguarding through improved security. All staff wear identity badges and there has been increased

signage throughout the site ensuring that members of the public do not have unsupervised access to pupils. Access to the abbey for pupils has also been restricted to ensure their safety at all times. Robust risk assessments are in place to ensure the safety of pupils from adults who should not have unsupervised access to children.

At the last inspection there were weaknesses concerning staff recruitment. This was to ensure that no staff work unsupervised with pupils unless that member of staff has been satisfactorily checked with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). The school appointed a Human Resources (HR) manager in October 2011 and governors and key staff have completed training in safer recruitment. The recruitment records demonstrate that robust procedures are now in place with all the necessary checks being completed before starting work at the school. A risk assessment is undertaken to consider permitting a member of staff to start work pending a satisfactory CRB disclosure. All the resident monks in the adjoining monastery have had CRB checks undertaken by the diocese.

Lastly, the school had not been demonstrating that reasonable action is taken to reduce risks identified by risk assessments. This related to risks in the boarding houses. Risk assessment forms have been completed for all the boarding houses and detail specific control measures or actions needed for safety purposes. For example, restrictors needed for the ground floor windows. The form has a column to record the date the action is completed and all boarding houses are visited on a regular basis.

## **National minimum standards**

The school has made good progress and now meets all the national minimum standards for boarding schools.