

ST MARY'S BOARDING JUDGED 'OUTSTANDING' BY OFSTED INSPECTION



St Mary's boarding has received the highest accolade by the Government's inspection body, providing *'an outstanding level of care to boarders'* by an independent OFSTED (government's Office for Education) inspection undertaken in March 2008. The school's Governing body was judged as placing *'great importance on the boarding provision.'*

Among the many highlights of the report, the following comments stand out:

Helping Girls to Settle in and Providing Continuing Support:

Boarding students remarked on the 'positive, supportive relationships in the boarding community [...] The support given when settling in is described by some boarders as one of the best things about boarding.'

'Those experiencing homesickness report that staff notice anyone who appears unhappy and offer support and reassurance.'

'Boarders' relationships with staff promote the provision of personal support and trust. Boarders generally feel that they can talk to a wide range of people if they have personal problems, including house staff, teachers, the head of boarding and the headmistress.'

'Boarders are encouraged to maintain contact with their families by e-mail, phone and by post, with no restrictions placed on contact.'

The Boarding Family:

'The boarding staff are well organised and managed by an experienced and dynamic headmistress and head of boarding.'

'The head of boarding ensures that the welfare of boarders is given first consideration and the school communicates this approach clearly to staff and boarders.'

'Boarders enjoy positive relationships with each other, where older boarders, or those who have boarded for longer, support those in need of support or guidance.'

'One area the school performs particularly well in is in the encouragement provided to boarders engaging in activities that are both enjoyable and help promote responsible attitudes and generosity.'

And Not Forgetting... The Food:

'The catering provision at the school is of the highest quality, with a range of fresh meals provided on a daily basis. Fresh fruit is always provided, along with salads and healthy meal choices.'

To download the full OFSTED inspection report, please use the link below:

<http://www.stmaryscambridge.co.uk/current/pdf/OFSTEDBoarding2008.pdf>

More than an official inspection though, it's the girls' opinions that really count. Sixth Form student and Deputy Head Boarder Chanel T, who also edited this year's boarders' magazine, summed up the special place that is St Mary's boarding in her magazine editorial: "We are not only a bunch of girls who live together, we are also a big family. Boarding is like our second home, where we have our lovely boarding mistresses looking after of us all the time as our second parents, where we have our friends with us, just like our sisters."

