

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records 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, the inspection reports 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools ('boarding NMS'). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards, including the boarding NMS, may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection 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 in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management, together with the NMS covering the same areas. In addition, the standards relating to XYZ are also included. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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 full regulations 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](#).

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, the 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 junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 Results in IGCSE examinations in the years 2015 to 2017 have been higher than worldwide norms
- 2.5 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2015 to 2017 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 **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 their 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 variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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. They also include 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 statement of boarding principles [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.**

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.23 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good
- 2.24 Staff ensure that all children including those with SEND or EAL make good progress in relation to their starting points. The provision meets the needs of all the children who attend and provides a very caring environment in which children thrive and enjoy their learning.
- 2.25 Dedicated and committed staff ensure that the children in their care are nurtured, happy and secure in the setting. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding as a result of the calm environment and the very good support and understanding given. Parents value the welcoming, caring atmosphere and the daily contact with staff.
- 2.26 The arrangements for children's safeguarding and welfare are highly effective. Regular risk assessments of indoor and outdoor learning environments alongside up to date training and comprehensive documentation ensure children are safe.
- 2.27 The setting benefits from good leadership and a strong team who work together to evaluate provision and identify areas for future development. However, processes for supporting parents' understanding of how their child is progressing in relation to their age need strengthening and existing arrangements for staff supervision need to be developed.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.28 The effectiveness of leadership and management is good.
- 2.29 All staff work well together and set high expectations for the care of the children. They consider the effectiveness of the provision and seek to ensure the children are happy and secure.
- 2.30 Leaders appraise staff effectively. Appraisals lead to the identification of training needs, which benefit individuals and the setting. The leadership team operates an open- door policy, which gives staff the opportunity to discuss any ideas, make suggestions or raise questions. However, whilst informal arrangements for supervision are in place these are not utilised as strongly as possible to develop staff's professional skills to support children's welfare and development.
- 2.31 There is a culture of constant evaluation in the setting. Leaders seek the views of staff and parents and take these into account when devising the action plan for the EYFS. Staff share good practice, discuss concerns and suggest ways to improve children's learning experience. Routines are well embedded and ensure children are cared for. The welfare and development of the children are a focus in regular staff meetings.
- 2.32 Learning programmes provide a well-balanced experience for the youngest children, focusing on their development in the prime areas of learning. Staff monitor the needs and interests of each child and place these at the heart of the provision in the baby room. Staff use day to day assessment of children's learning effectively to identify the next steps in their development. They track children's individual achievements to monitor their progress against expectations and to ensure they are prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- 2.33 Staff show consistently high expectations of children's behaviour. They gently distract them where necessary and encourage them to share toys and be kind to one another. Staff embed equality, diversity and British values into the life of the setting. Leaders ensure that the needs and particular interests of every child are recognised, including the careful planning of appropriate activities. Resources such as simple jigsaws and books reflect different cultures and many celebrations from around the world are integrated into the children's learning experiences.

- 2.34 Safeguarding is effective and prioritised highly. Leadership is very knowledgeable and ensure that all staff remain up to date with their training. Leaders review updates sent from the local safeguarding children's board and all staff meetings have safeguarding on the agenda. All staff understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe.
- 2.35 In interviews and in questionnaires parents expressed positive views about the early years provision. They are very happy with the level of care their children receive and welcome the daily contact with staff, whom they find approachable and friendly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 2.36 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- 2.37 High expectations are evident throughout the setting in the thoughtful and appropriately challenging teaching and in the targets that staff set for children. Key persons have a detailed knowledge of the children in their care. They support their learning using commentary and questioning to encourage children to explore ideas and think about their activities.
- 2.38 Children under two can use key persons' names and respond happily when encouraged to say or sign please and thank you.
- 2.39 The suitably qualified staff throughout the setting understand the needs of the age group. They carefully plan to develop children's personal, physical and communication skills. Staff engage with children using age appropriate language and enhance their learning by encouraging them to explore activities. The youngest children can concentrate on activities independently, for example when mark making with coloured pencils or playing in the sand.
- 2.40 Weekly planning sheets reflect staff's understanding of the types of activities that engage and interest the children and move their learning and development forward. They show a good awareness of children's individual needs and ensure that activities and interests are tracked carefully so that children's next steps in learning are identified.
- 2.41 Staff work in partnership with parents. Parents are offered a home visit and the opportunity to attend the setting with their child prior to them starting in the nursery. Staff gather information to ensure key people have a very good understanding of the needs and interests of the children. Once children have settled into their new surroundings an assessment is carried out which is shared with parents. Parents are kept fully informed about their child's day in the setting by means of a daily diary and feedback at the end of each day. At present parents can contribute to their child's learning informally and they are invited to take their child's learning record home at any time. However, there is no regular and active encouragement to do so. Information for parents is not as focussed as possible to help them understand how their children are doing in relation to their age and how parents can support children in their learning.
- 2.42 Teaching supports the development of children's personal, social, communication and physical skills. It also reflects a commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity through the recognition of individual needs and the celebration of different cultures. The curriculum is underpinned by a focus on the characteristics of effective learning, which ensures that all children are given opportunities to develop as enthusiastic and independent learners and are ready for the next stage in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.43 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding
- 2.44 There is an extremely positive culture in the setting. Staff create a calm, nurturing atmosphere, and show an excellent understanding of how to support the development of children's confidence and well-being. They give children time to explore and persevere with ideas and interests. For example, very young children were absorbed when mark making and carefully turned the pages of writing books and concentrated as they produced marks on the pages. Children enjoy exploring books and will listen and respond to a whole story with engagement and enjoyment.
- 2.45 Strong relationships are evident between staff and children. The children respond well to encouragement and want to please. They are proud of their achievements, such as when saying 'look, look' when completing a drawing. Very young children playing outside with boats in a water tray enjoyed the freedom to push them hard to force water out onto the ground. Children sing and dance when engaged in activities demonstrating an enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning.
- 2.46 Very good arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition between rooms so that children and parents can build up trust and confidence in a new key person. There is very good communication between the existing key person and the new one and the process is managed so that children are emotionally prepared to make the move.
- 2.47 Staff promote good health and hygiene routines, particularly hand washing before eating. Children have a choice of fruit at snack time and are offered either water or milk. Practices within the setting contribute to the development of healthy lifestyles. There is a strong focus on developing good eating habits. Children eat a wide range of healthy meals and have access to water throughout the day. They show confidence and manage risk very well as they navigate their way around the baby room and outdoor environment.
- 2.48 Adults support children to develop independence and to recognise the importance of sharing and listening to others. They encourage children to take turns during circle time and effectively teach children the importance of listening to each other and having consideration for others' feelings.

Outcomes for children

- 2.49 Outcomes for children are good
- 2.50 All children including those with SEND progress well from their starting points and in line with expectations for their age. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Favourable ratios, nurturing interactions and many group social occasions such as snack times, mealtimes and when participating in stories and songs promote the development of good relationships and early communication skills.
- 2.51 Children under two display high levels of curiosity and engagement in what they find around them. They can use spades and press buttons. They play with balls of different sizes. They can listen and respond to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion, such as when responding to questions about the characters in a book about animals. All children including those who are very young, demonstrate high levels of independence when eating, handling and using cutlery and finding their own drinking cup.
- 2.52 By the end of the EYFS most children meet, and some exceed the early learning goals for this stage of education.

Compliance with statutory requirements

2.53 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvements to its provision for children in the early years.

- Formalise supervision procedures to fully support staff development and so the welfare of children.
- Strengthen the processes for supporting parents' understanding of how their child is progressing and how they can work with the setting to support their child's learning.