



Material Change Inspection Report

Heath Mount School

June 2024

School's details

School	Heath Mount School			
DfE number	919/6046			
Registered charity number	311069			
Address	Heath Mount School Woodhall Park Watton at Stone Hertford Hertfordshire SG14 3NG			
Telephone number	01920 830230			
Email address	office@heathmount.org			
Headmaster	Mr Christopher Gillam			
Chair of governors	Mrs Juliette Hodson			
Proprietor	Heath Mount School Trust Ltd			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	520			
	Day pupils	431	Boarders	89
	EYFS	95	Pre-prep	102
	Prep	323		
Date of inspection	7 June 2024			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Heath Mount School is a co-educational day and boarding school. Boarders are accommodated on a flexi-boarding basis in two single-sex boarding houses situated on the school site. The school includes an early years setting and is overseen by a board of governors. The school has 113 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), one of whom has an education, health and care plan. Two pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in January 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase the maximum number of pupils from 520 to 560. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 9	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 10	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 20	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff); NMS 19	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 30 (premises and accommodation); NMS 4	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 8]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standards.
- 2.4 The school implements its safeguarding policy and procedures effectively. It acts in the best interests of the child, including by encouraging pupils to share any concerns that they might have and providing a range of methods for them to do so. The school responds effectively and in line with locally agreed inter-agency procedures whenever safeguarding concerns are raised, including any related to child-on-child abuse, and provides appropriate support to pupils affected. This is confirmed in records of safeguarding. Leaders liaise effectively with relevant external agencies and make referrals swiftly when required. All staff and governors have received appropriate safeguarding training. Staff understand the different forms that abuse can take. They implement their safeguarding responsibilities under the safeguarding and whistleblowing policies and staff code of conduct effectively. The school has suitable arrangements for responding to allegations against, or low-level concerns about, staff. The school teaches pupils appropriately how to keep themselves safe, including when online, and maintains effective filtering and monitoring of internet usage. The school carries out all required pre-employment checks methodically and records these accurately in a single central record of appointments. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures, including through an annual audit based on the local authority proforma for this purpose. Safeguarding leaders are suitably trained for their role and ensure sufficient cover for the whole school, including in the early years. They have the capacity to continue to do so once the proposed material change takes place.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 9]

- 2.5 The school meets the standards.
- 2.6 The school ensures that all required checks and maintenance are carried out systematically. Leaders and staff implement a suitable system for dealing with any health and safety defects. Staff receive appropriate training in health and safety, including at induction. Leaders and governors maintain effective oversight of health and safety, including through a health and safety committee that meets regularly. Health and safety arrangements are effective and likely to remain so once the proposed material change takes place.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 10]

- 2.7 The school meets the standards.
- 2.8 Fire safety arrangements are effective. Leaders arrange for external specialists to carry out regular fire risk assessments on all buildings and act on their findings. Staff receive fire safety training, including

during induction, with fire marshals receiving enhanced training. The school carries out regular fire evacuation drills, including termly drills on different days and at different times during boarding hours. Fire alarms and fire-fighting equipment are checked and serviced regularly. The fire safety arrangements are likely to remain effective once the proposed material change takes place.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 20]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 Leaders ensure that pupils are appropriately supervised, including in the early years and boarding. Required staff-to-child ratios are maintained at all times in Nursery and Reception classes. There are at least three staff available in each boarding house during boarding hours, including overnight. Staff are deployed effectively to provide efficient supervision during breaks and lunchtime and are highly visible to pupils. The school employs sufficient staff to be able to supervise 560 pupils effectively.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 9]

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 Leaders ensure that all parts of the provision, such as the premises, activities and trips, are subject to suitable risk assessments. Risk assessments identify potential risk and hazards and put forward appropriate control measures to mitigate against these. They take into account individual pupils' welfare needs, such as any allergies or dietary requirements. Staff receive training in the school's approach to risk assessment. Leaders review all risk assessments for their suitability. Risk assessment arrangements are likely to remain suitable once the proposed material change takes place.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 19]

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 Leaders ensure that all required pre-employment checks are carried out systematically before staff, including those in boarding, or governors take up their appointments (the school does not use supply staff). All safer recruitment checks are recorded accurately in the single central record of appointments.

Premises and accommodation – [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–30; NMS 4]

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.
- 2.16 The premises and accommodation are maintained to a suitable standard. They include suitable toilet and washing facilities. Medical facilities are suitable, including for any boarders who might need medical support during boarding hours. The medical facilities contain basins and are near toilets. They include separate rooms with beds for male and female pupils. Water is tested for suitability and drinking water outlets are labelled. The acoustics of the premises are suitable and there is adequate internal and external lighting. The school site contains a very large outdoor area. The premises and accommodation, including the teaching and dining facilities, have sufficient capacity to cater for 560 pupils.
- 2.17 Boarding accommodation is suitable, well-lit, appropriately heated and well-maintained. Both male and female boarders' boarding houses contain comfortable sleeping accommodation and suitable toilet and washing facilities that provide appropriate privacy. Boarders are able to personalise their

rooms. Staff accommodation is separate from boarder accommodation. Effective measures are in place to prevent any unauthorised access to boarders or to boarding accommodation. Both boarding houses have the capacity to cater for additional numbers of boarders.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

2.18 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]

2.19 The school meets the standards.

2.20 Leaders have the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure that the school meets the standards and actively promotes pupils' wellbeing. The proprietor and leaders have planned and prepared effectively for the proposed material change, including by reconfiguring a building to provide a large additional Nursery classroom and ensuring sufficient staffing to cater for the needs of 560 pupils effectively.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's proposal, to increase the maximum number of pupils from 520 to 560, be approved.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the headmaster, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors. He visited different areas of the school, talked with groups of pupils and scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.