



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

Merchant Taylors' Boys' School

February 2019



Contents

Contents	2
School's Details	3
1. Background Information	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection	5
Preface	5
Key findings	6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided	6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils	6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	7
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools	7
PART 6 – Provision of information	7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	8
3. Inspection Evidence	9

School's Details

School	Merchant Taylors' Boys' School		
DfE number	343/6129		
Registered charity number	526681		
Address	Merchant Taylors' Boys' School Liverpool Road Crosby Liverpool Merseyside L23 0QP		
Telephone number	0151 9283308		
Email address	info@merchanttaylor.com		
Headteacher	Mr David Wickes		
Chair of governors	Mrs Beverly Bell		
Age range	7 to 18		
Number of pupils on roll	733		
	Boys	733	
	Juniors	175	
	Seniors	417	Sixth Form 141
Inspection dates	27 to 28 February 2019		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Merchant Taylors' Boys' School is a day school for boys aged from 7 to 18 years situated in Crosby, north of Liverpool. It is part of a family of schools comprising Merchant Taylors' Primary School, for girls aged 4 to 11 years and boys aged 4 to 7 years; Merchant Taylors' Girls' School for girls aged 11 to 18; and the Boys' School, which has a junior section for boys aged 7 to 11 years and a senior section for boys aged 11 to 18 years. The school was founded in 1620 by a Merchant Taylor of London. A single governing body oversees all four schools. The head of the junior school reports to the governing body, as does the senior school headmaster, who was appointed in 2018.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide a safe, warm and caring community where people look out for one another and to develop well-educated, well-rounded and caring young men, who will play a significant role in society. At all ages, it seeks to educate boys to have an enquiring mind, to be self-motivated, to be good team members as well as leaders, and to pursue excellence, inside and outside the classroom.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils are predominantly drawn from white British families, with a small number from Chinese or Asian families. The wide catchment area extends from south and central Liverpool to Bootle and Crosby, north and east towards Southport, and also includes Warrington, Wigan and St Helens. Nationally standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of both junior and senior schools is above average. The school has identified 117 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyscalculia, all of whom receive support for their learning. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or statement of educational needs. There are 11 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive additional support for their English. Data used by the school have identified 82 pupils as being the more able in the school's population. The curriculum is modified for them, and for 2 other pupils because of their special talents in sport.

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. 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.

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 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 COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. 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.

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](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

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 2016 and 2017, performance has been well above the national average for maintained schools, and in line with the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE examinations were higher than the worldwide norms in 2016
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.8 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 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; most health and safety requirements are met; 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.
- 2.10 Although the school takes nearly all fire precautions to ensure as far as reasonably practicable the safety of staff or anyone else legally on the premises, fire doors are routinely propped open.
- 2.11 **The standard[s] relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met but those in paragraph 12 [fire prevention] are not met.**

Action point 1

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the school must ensure that fire doors are not propped open [paragraph 12]. |
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PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.13 The school does not meet the regulatory requirements regarding recruitment checks of staff because not all checks have been undertaken before staff start work in the school.
- 2.14 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 18(1), 18(2)(a), (b), (c)(i), (c)(iii) and (c)(iv), (d) and (e), are met but those in paragraph 18(2)(c)(ii) [medical fitness] and 18(3) [required checks carried out before commencing work at the school] are not met.**

Action point 2

- **the school must ensure that checks are made of medical fitness of staff and that, where required, all checks are completed before starting work [paragraphs 18(2)(c)(ii) and 18(3)].**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.15 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' 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.
- 2.16 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] 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.
- 2.18 **The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is 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.
- 2.20 **The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.21 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management actively promote the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.22 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met. In particular, leaders and managers have not always monitored the school's fire precautions and recruitment processes sufficiently thoroughly.
- 2.23 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in sub-paragraph 34 (1)(c) [promotion of the well-being of pupils] is met but those in sub-paragraphs 34 (1)(a) and (b) [knowledge and skills and fulfilment of responsibilities to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently] are not met.**

Action point 3

- **the proprietor must ensure that leadership and management demonstrate the skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently [paragraphs 34 (1)(a) and (b)].**

3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and one of the designated safeguarding governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registrations and an assembly. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Janet Pickering

Reporting inspector

Mrs Helen Andrews

Compliance team inspector (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)