



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT
FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

THE ORATORY SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2017



CONTENTS

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	8
PART 6 – Provision of information	8
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	8
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	8
3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE	10

SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	The Oratory School			
DfE number	931/6034			
Registered charity number	309112			
Address	The Oratory School Woodcote Reading Berkshire RG8 0PJ			
Telephone number	01491 683500			
Email address	enquiries@oratory.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Joseph Smith			
Chair of governors	Dr Christina Hill Williams			
Age range	11 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	243			
	Boys	243	Girls	0
	Day pupils	108	Boarders	135
	Seniors	151	Sixth Form	92
Inspection dates	01 to 02 November 2017			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 The Oratory School is an independent day and boarding school for boys aged between 11 and 18 years. It is a Roman Catholic school, which accepts boys of all faiths or none. The school and the Oratory Preparatory School are part of the Oratory School Association, a registered charity; they are run as separate schools but share the same governing body. Founded in 1859 by Blessed John Henry Newman, the school has been on its present rural site since 1942. Boys normally join at age 11 or 13; junior boarders (Years 7 and 8) are housed in St Philip House, and boys join one of four senior boarding houses in Year 9. Since the previous inspection, the sports centre has been refurbished, and a new head has been appointed.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school seeks to pursue excellence in all it does, ensuring that every boy fulfils his maximum potential, developing his mind, body and soul in the process. It aims to value each individual for his own sake, respecting his dignity and self-worth, and inspiring him to learn and grow.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, mostly from the south of England, although there are 64 boarders from overseas. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the senior school pupils is above average, and that of the sixth form is broadly average. The school has identified 71 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 56 pupils and all receive additional support. Data used by the school have identified 33 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 25 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.

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 COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such 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.

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](#).

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, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2015 and 2016, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.3 Where data is available for 2015 and 2016, results in A-level examinations have been in-line with the national average for sixth-form pupils in maintained schools.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 **The standards 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

- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 The school does not have adequate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, as these do not pay due regard to current statutory guidance. The required checks on staff and governors are not always completed prior to appointment, including those for the barred list and prohibition from teaching and from management. Safeguarding training for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and any deputies is not updated as required. The school did not report promptly to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the National College for Teaching and Learning (NCTL) a person whose services are no longer used, where the referral criteria are met. The school does not ensure that, should an enhanced DBS check be delayed, a barred list check is undertaken and appropriate safeguards put in place. The school does not consistently carry out identity checks on employees of contractors, or obtain written confirmation that the required pre-employment checks have been made. The standard on child protection (NMS 11) is not met for the same reasons and represents a failure to safeguard boarders.

2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9-16, 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, 6-10, 12, 15 and 16 are met but those in paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b) and in NMS 11 are not met.

Action point 1

- the school must ensure that its arrangements for the appointment of staff, contractors and governors pay due regard to statutory guidance, including ensuring that checks are made against the barred list and the lists of those prohibited from teaching or from management prior to the person taking up their role at the school [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b), and for the same reason NMS 11].

Action point 2

- the school must ensure that those senior staff with responsibility for leading safeguarding undergo training for the role, which is updated as required [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b), and for the same reason NMS 11].

Action point 3

- the school must ensure that where the referral criteria are met, it reports promptly to the DBS and/or consider referring to the NCTL any person whose services are no longer used [paragraphs 7 (a) and (b); 8(a) and (b), and for the same reason NMS 11.1].

Action point 4

- the school must ensure that should an enhanced DBS check be delayed, a barred list check must be undertaken and appropriate safeguards put in place [paragraphs 7 (a) and (b); 8(a) and (b), and for the same reason NMS 11].

Action point 5

- the school must ensure that in the case of employees of contractors, it checks identity and obtains written confirmation from the employer that the required pre-employment checks have been made, before a person starts work at the school [paragraphs 7 (a) and (b); 8(a) and (b) and for the same reason NMS 11].

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

2.12 Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised. The school does not appoint guardians.

2.13 The school does not make all appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors prior to a person taking up an appointment. Staff qualifications are not always checked. Overseas checks are not always made for staff who have lived outside the United Kingdom in the recent past. The school does not ensure that its register of appointments is accurate and complete.

2.14 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraph 18(2)(a), (b), (c)(i - iii), 18(2)(d) and (4), paragraph 20 and 21(1), (2), (3)(a)(i - ii), (4) to (8) and NMS 14.2-14.4 are met but those in paragraph 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f), 18(3) and paragraph 21(3)(a)(i - viii) and (b), and NMS 14.1 are not met.

Action point 6

- the school must ensure that all appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors are carried out prior to a person beginning work in the school, notably those for qualifications and criminal records overseas. [paragraph 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f); paragraph 18(3) and for the same reason NMS 14.1].

Action point 7

- the school must ensure that all checks are recorded as required in its single central register of appointments [paragraph 21(3)(a)(i - viii), (b) and for the same reason NMS 14.1].

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.15 Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils 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 those 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, and its results in public examinations, 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 standards 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 standards 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 Leadership and management 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 Governors have not ensured that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that regulatory standards are met consistently. The oversight and recording of pre-employment checks, safeguarding training and procedures is inadequate.

2.23 The standards relating to leadership and management of the school in sub-paragraph 34(1)(c) and NMS 13.2, 13.5-13.9 are met but those in sub-paragraphs 34(1)(a) and (b) and NMS 13.1, 13.3 and 13.4 are not met.

Action point 7

- **governors must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibility demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Independent Schools Standards and National Minimum Standards for Boarding are met consistently. [paragraphs 34(1)(a) and (b) and NMS 13.1, 13.3 and 13.4].**

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 a group of governors, and attended chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Susan Marks	Reporting inspector
Mr Gregory Cole	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school)
Mr Jonathan Cuff	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy principal, Society of Heads school)
Mrs Nathalie Hart	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)