



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT

THE POINTER SCHOOL

MAY 2018



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	The Pointer School			
DfE number	203/6065			
Address	The Pointer School 19 Stratheden Road Blackheath London SE3 7TH			
Telephone number	020 8293 1331			
Email address	headmaster@pointers-school.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Robert Higgins			
Proprietor	Mr Robert Higgins			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	376			
	Boys	213	Girls	163
	EYFS	134	Juniors	242
Inspection dates	23 to 24 May 2018			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 The Pointer School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between three and eleven years. It provides an education founded on Christian principles. The main premises for Years 2 to 6 are located in a detached Victorian house near Blackheath. The Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 are situated in a Georgian building, a short walk away.
- 1.2 Since the last inspection a new leadership team has been established and the provision for extra-curricular activities and games has been developed further.
- 1.3 The current headmaster has been at the school since 1994 and is the sole proprietor. He is assisted by an advisory board.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school's aim is to provide a high-quality Christian education which instils in children the natural values of integrity, friendship and respect for others within a family atmosphere, enabling them to develop a strong sense of self-worth and achieve more than they may have believed possible. It has three stated aims for its pupils: they will be well educated, happy and generous in spirit.

About the pupils

- 1.5 The majority of pupils live locally, and come from families with professional backgrounds. Their diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds reflect that of the local community. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 59 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities which include physical, social-emotional, auditory processing and working memory difficulties, all receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language for 124 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers and out of class support. The most able pupils are catered for through a curriculum that offers different levels of challenge. For some pupils, out-of-class enrichment lessons are provided to extend their knowledge and particular talents beyond the classroom curriculum.

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.

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](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

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 relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 The school ensures that 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.
- 2.8 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils do not pay due regard to current statutory guidance. Staff with designated safeguarding responsibility have not undertaken specific and regular training for the role which is in line with local procedures.
- 2.9 The required checks on prohibition from teaching have not been undertaken consistently for relevant staff, before these staff begin work at the school.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 8 to 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 7 [safeguarding] are not met.**

Action point 1

- **the school must ensure that staff with designated safeguarding responsibility undertake child protection training at least every two years, in line with the local safeguarding children's board inter-agency working protocols [paragraph 7(a) and (b)]**

Action point 2

- **the school must ensure that checks on prohibition from teaching, if appropriate to staff roles, are undertaken prior to staff starting work at the school [paragraph 7(a) and (b)]**

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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of supply staff and proprietors.
- 2.12 The school does not always check staff qualifications as required, prior to appointment. The single central register of staff appointments is not maintained as required due to incorrect recording and omissions, including identifying whether or not certain recruitment checks are required, namely those relating to qualifications and right to work in the UK.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 19 and 20 are met but those in paragraph 18 and 21 are not met.**

Action point 3

- **the school must ensure that staff qualification checks are carried out prior to appointment where appropriate [paragraph 18(2)(c)(iv) and 18(2)(3)]**

Action point 4

- **the school must keep and maintain a single central register of staff appointments which ensures all required checks have an entry relevant to their role and, in particular, records qualifications and the right to work checks, including the date on which each such check was completed [paragraph 21(3)(a)(iv) and (vii)]**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 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.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.18 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.
- 2.19 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.20 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, fulfil their responsibilities effectively and actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures are not correctly implemented. The proprietor has not ensured that staff with designated safeguarding responsibility are appropriately trained, as required by statutory guidance.
- 2.21 **The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in sub-paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c) [knowledge and skills; the fulfilment of responsibilities; promoting the well-being of pupils] is not met.**

Action point 5

- **the school must ensure that leadership and management acquire the good skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the Independent School Standards are met consistently, and pupils' well-being is actively promoted [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)]**

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 proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with 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 Tracy Handford

Reporting inspector

Mr Timothy Lewis

Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)