



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

THE RIVER SCHOOL

MARCH 2017



School's details

School	The River School			
DfE Number	885/6030			
Registered charity number	516511			
Address	Oakfield House Droitwich Road Worcester Worcestershire WR3 7ST			
Telephone number	01905 457047			
Email address	info@riverschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Parry			
Chair of governors	Mr Timothy Crow			
Age range	2 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	85			
	Boys	44	Girls	41
	EYFS	21	Phase 2	22
	Phase 3	19	Phase 4	23
Pupils' ability	The school has recently introduced standardised tests of ability, where data indicate that the ability of pupils is broadly average.			
Pupils' needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 12. They require support with attachment difficulties and general learning weaknesses. Three have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.			
History of the school	The River School is an independent Christian school for boys and girls aged 2 to 16 years. Established in 1985, it is set in a Victorian country house on the northern boundary of the city of Worcester amongst eight acres of parkland.			
Ownership and governing structure	The school is operated by the Worcester Christian Education Trust, a registered charity, and governed by a board of trustees.			

School structure

Phase 1 is the Early Years department. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 are in Phase 2; those in Years 5 to 8 form Phase 3 and Phase 4 is made up of pupils in Years 9 to 11.

Inspection dates

8 to 9 March 2017

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. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or 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 following their inspection 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 unmet standards and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

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.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

The school meets almost all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated requirements. In order to meet all the standards, the school should take immediate action to remedy the deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

Results at GCSE examinations were above the national average for maintained schools in 2012-13, and in line with the national average for maintained schools in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

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.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and maintain appropriate links with local agencies.

Staff show a strong awareness of the school's safeguarding arrangements. However, appointment procedures do not pay due regard to current statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) September 2016*. Checks against the barred list and for prohibition from teaching are not carried out on all staff prior to their appointment.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9 - 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 the standard in paragraph 7 relating to safeguarding is not met.

Action point 1

- the school must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and that such arrangements have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State, notably by ensuring that the required checks against the barred list and for prohibition orders are carried out on all staff prior to commencement of work [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors, but not all checks are completed before appointment. A register is kept as required.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school set out in paragraphs 18(1), (2) and (4), and paragraphs 19 - 21 are met but the standard in paragraph 18(3) relating to checks that must be completed before a person's appointment is not met.

Action point 2

- the school must ensure that all required staff appointment checks are carried out prior to appointment [paragraph 18(3)].

PART 5

Premises and accommodation at schools

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical 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.

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

PART 6

Provision of information

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.

The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

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.

The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The governors do not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their roles effectively so that the standards are met consistently and the well-being of pupils is actively promoted. Staff recruitment procedures and pre-appointment checks are not managed with the required rigour.

The standard relating to the leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is not met.

Action point 3

- **the governors must ensure the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their roles effectively, so that the standards are met consistently and the well-being of pupils is actively promoted. In particular, staff appointment procedures must ensure that all required checks of their suitability to work with children are completed before appointment [paragraphs 34 (a), (b) and (c)].**

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the chairman of trustees. They attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Dr Alison Primrose

Reporting inspector

Mr Robert Ukiah

Compliance team inspector (Chief operating officer, HMC school)