



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Barnardiston Hall Preparatory School

October 2020



School's details

School	Barnardiston Hall Preparatory School			
DfE number	935/6023			
Early Years registration number	EY356342			
Address	Barnardiston Hall Preparatory School Barnardiston Haverhill Suffolk CB9 7TG			
Telephone number	01440 786316			
Email address	registrar@barnardiston-hall.co.uk			
Headmaster	Col Keith Boulter			
Proprietor	Col Keith Boulter			
Age range	0 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	207			
	Day pupils	193	Boarders	14
	Nursery	46	Pre-prep	65
	Prep	96		
Date of visit	13 October 2020			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Barnardiston Hall Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between six months and thirteen years. It is situated in Haverhill, in Suffolk. Boarding provision is available from the age of seven. The school is owned and governed by the proprietor, who is also the headmaster. Boarders are accommodated within the main school building, with the girls' and boys' houses accommodated on separate floors. The nursery, part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), is located within separate, purpose- built accommodation.
- 1.2 The school has thirty-two pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, of whom four have an education, health and care plan. Ten pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance and educational quality inspection in May 2019.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.3 This was an unannounced additional inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7	Not met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour); NMS 12; EYFS 3.52	Not met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision); NMS 15; EYFS 3.28 to 3.36	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32 (provision of information - safeguarding); EYFS 3.73	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints); NMS 18; EYFS 3.74 and 3.75	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	Not met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7]

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 does not meet the standards or requirements.
- 2.4 Those with designated responsibility for safeguarding have undertaken appropriate training and have ensured that this training is updated within timescales that take into account the availability of training during the current pandemic. Staff attend regular update training and have a clear understanding of safeguarding and their responsibilities in line with on the most recent update of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. Suitable arrangements for the induction of new staff include training in safeguarding both through online courses and face-to-face training. The behaviour policy and related policies are provided to staff but are not always appropriately implemented, including with regard to pupils with SEND, as outlined below. The school's missing child policy is appropriate, and staff are aware of the procedures to follow should such a child go missing. An appropriate code of conduct is implemented effectively and understood by all staff and includes advice on e-safety and the appropriate use of social media.
- 2.5 During interviews, staff reported that they feel confident with the school's whistleblowing procedures and that they would be confident to make any referral directly to children's social services should the need arise. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they can raise any concerns and be listened to. They were aware of the need to keep themselves safe and understood the current procedures in place with regard to COVID-19. They feel that there is always someone that they can talk to from the staff body, including during boarding time, and that action will be taken if necessary.
- 2.6 The school's arrangements for dealing with and referring concerns about children in need and/or at risk are appropriate. The DSL understands the role of effective liaison with the local children's safeguarding board and concerns about pupils are reported in a timely fashion.
- 2.7 Safeguarding procedures are reviewed annually by the proprietor and the senior management team. Arrangements for the handling of allegations against members of staff have not always fully followed the school's stated policy. Advice has not been consistently and systematically sought from the local authority designated officer for safeguarding (LADO) during the course of an investigation to enable due weight to be given to the views of the LADO. Records of concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions are maintained. However, the manner in which these are kept does not enable effective monitoring of events to ascertain a consistent adherence to policy.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 12; EYFS 3.52]

- 2.8 The school does not meet the standards or requirements.
- 2.9 The school promotes positive behaviour at all times, including in boarding, and the behaviour policy and the school disciplinary and exclusion policy are available for staff. However, they are not fully implemented. Policy states that where it is necessary to write a behaviour management plan to support the needs of individual pupils, for example those with SEND, it will be shared with staff.

Although such plans are written, they have not always been shared with all staff and as a result plans have not always been appropriately implemented. Records of sanctions, the majority of which are minor and designed to promote positive behaviour, are not maintained with sufficient clarity to facilitate monitoring and the identification of significant patterns and trends in the school or boarding houses. There is no record of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

Supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 15; EYFS 3.28 to 3.36]

- 2.10 The school meets the standards and requirements.
- 2.11 The school implements a suitable supervision policy. Duty rotas and discussions with staff and pupils confirm that pupils are always supervised sufficiently, including those in boarding and in the EYFS.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c); EYFS 3.73]

- 2.12 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.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; NMS 18; EYFS 3.74 and 3.75]

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 Parental complaints 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 management of the school. Each stage operates within clear time scales which are in line with the school's complaints policy. The school responds in a timely fashion to concerns. Records maintained indicate that complaints are correctly considered, and action taken as appropriate, whether or not a complaint is upheld.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 13]

- 2.15 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.16 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively and actively promote the well-being of the pupils, with the result that the other standards are not consistently met. The school has not always fully implemented its safeguarding policies and procedures.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7

- Ensure that the school systematically seeks and gives due weight to the views of the LADO when handling an allegation regarding a member of staff or other adult working with children [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7]
- Implement policies pertaining to safeguarding in full, including with regard to pupils with SEND. [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4]

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, paragraph 9; NMS 12; EYFS 3.52

- Implement the behaviour and associated policies consistently and share behaviour management plans appropriately to ensure they are actioned by all staff [paragraph 9(b); NMS 12.1 and 12.2; EYFS 3.52]
- Record sanctions sufficiently clearly in the school and boarding houses to enable patterns to be identified, and maintain a record of serious sanctions [paragraph 9(b) and (c); NMS 12.1 and 12.2; EYFS 3.52]

ISSR Part 8, Leadership and management, paragraph 34; NMS 13

- Ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, that they actively promote the well-being of pupils, and keep required records in boarding, including a record of serious sanctions [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.1, 13.3 to 5 and 13.8].

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the proprietor. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.