

Chinthurst School

52 Tadworth Street, Tadworth, Surrey, KT20 5QZ

Date of visit 22 March 2016

Purpose of visit

This was an unannounced emergency visit at the request of the Department for Education which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, particularly those concerned with welfare, health and safety (safeguarding), the suitability of staff and proprietors, premises and accommodation and the manner in which complaints are handled.

Characteristics of the School

Chinthurst is a co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of 2 to 13 years, situated on the outskirts of Tadworth. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. The school has 149 pupils on roll (124 boys and 25 girls), of whom 34 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Classes from Nursery to Year 2 are located in a separate building and are referred to as the Pre-prep and those from Years 3 to 8 referred to as the Main School. The school has identified 18 pupils as having special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional support, mainly within the classroom. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Ten pupils speak English as an additional language and three receive language support in school. The previous integrated inspection took place in December 2014. The deputy head became the headmaster in October 2015.

Inspection findings

The pupils spoken to during the inspection visit confirmed that they are happy at school, and feel safe and well cared for. They stressed the friendly, family nature of the school and the approachability of staff, which enables them to approach a range of adults for support should they have a problem.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b)]

The school does not meet all of the Regulations.

The school's policy, available on the website, dated January 2016 shows concern for pupils and references the most recent guidance, but does not include all the required content as noted below.

Despite its recent review, the policy retains a number of outdated references such as to the 'Independent Schools Regulations 2010', 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education', and 'CRB checks'. It presents conflicting information in a few places due to a failure to remove information when the policy has been amended. The policy clearly names two designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), the headmaster and the head of the EYFS, but does not state clearly that they deputise for one another if one is off site, nor does it give their contact details or those of the named safeguarding governor.

Staff have received suitable training for their responsibilities. Both DSLs have undertaken appropriate higher level training and in January 2016 all staff received training in line with Surrey Safeguarding Board requirements, as well as undertaking online Prevent training. The school has reduced the interval for staff training from three yearly to annually, though the policy is unclear since it includes both intervals. Suitable induction training for new staff includes safeguarding, the code of conduct, whistleblowing and KCSIE. A sample of staff interviewed confirmed they had received this training, though its content and evidence that it has taken place is not formally recorded.

Staff interviewed have a clear awareness that they should report any concerns about the welfare of pupils to the DSL. Whilst the policy confirms this referral pathway, it introduces confusion since it also states that the chosen path is a professional decision made by the staff member and recommends, rather than requires, that staff utilise the DSLs' skills. The distinction between the school's response to children at risk of harm and to children in need is not made clear. The policy correctly states that allegations against staff or other adults working in the school are reported to the LADO, though does not state that referral is immediate and at the latest within one working day; records do not clearly indicate whether this has ever been correctly implemented. The policy incorrectly states elsewhere that appropriate consultation will be at the Head's discretion. It does not clearly indicate that the school contributes to inter-agency working, such as for pupils who require additional support, nor does it assert that advice is sought from relevant authorities. However, records indicate that the DSL has contacted the Surrey Contact Centre in a timely manner. Contact details for the LADO and the Surrey Contact Centre are included in policy documentation.

The policy contains information from KCSIE about radicalisation and the Prevent duty though it does not give contact numbers for advice and support about extremism nor information about the possible signs of extremism or radicalisation. Pupils confirmed the school's assertion that strong e-safety filters are installed, to keep them safe when using the internet. Additionally, they reported that they are taught about e-safety regularly. Issues concerning faith and culture are discussed in religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. Visiting speakers are supervised and the school ensures that they have suitable background checks. However the protocol for checks is not mentioned in either the child protection or safer recruitment policy. The policy includes information about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) together with contact details for reporting, though the school's mandatory responsibility to report FGM to the police is not stated. The policy does not outline the school's reporting responsibilities for children missing education though does say that children's services will be informed of pupils with a child protection plan who are absent for more than two days.

The policy includes signs, types and indicators of abuse in line with KCSIE 2015. However a section on sexual abuse by young people, which does not emanate from this guidance, wrongly infers that a child might be able to give consent to sexual activity. The policy does not make provision for a concern about pupil on pupil abuse to be referred to an external safeguarding agency.

The governor with nominated responsibility for safeguarding has undertaken suitable training and exercises the role diligently, maintaining good liaison with the DSLs. For example, the

governor and DSLs recently undertook the Surrey Safeguarding Board's Audit and an action plan for continued improvements to safeguarding arrangements has been drawn up. Discussion with governors, confirmed in minutes of their meetings, indicates that safeguarding is considered at all board meetings. The most recent policy, together with information about staff training and its implementation, was formally reviewed by the full governing body in February 2016. However the policy incorrectly indicates that the most recent governor review was in September 2014. Minutes relating to the recent review do not give sufficient detail to confirm that the governing body satisfied itself that procedures are rigorous and effective. Additionally, the review does not address shortcomings within the policy identified by inspectors.

The code of conduct for staff is published as an appendix. It gives suitable guidance to staff for many areas of their behaviour to avoid placing pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil, though does not include information about personal/intimate care and personal living accommodation on site, both areas relevant to the school's context. A suitable policy on the use of mobile phones and cameras is published on the school's website but is not annexed to the safeguarding policy as required for the EYFS. Staff interviewed demonstrate a clear awareness of the need to ensure their behaviour is unambiguous and expressed confidence in the whistleblowing process as giving them confidence to report any concerns. They articulate a clear understanding of measures to ensure, as far as possible, pupils safety and welfare, including that pupils are appropriately supervised at all times.

The recruitment policy is annexed to the safeguarding policy but has not been revised to reflect the most recent statutory requirements; this has resulted in deficiencies in implementing some recruitment checks. The policy incorrectly refers to Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education rather than KCSIE 2015 and does not include provision for prohibition from management checks. It states that candidates for posts in the EYFS must disclose information as to whether they live in the same accommodation as a known offender, but does not give a sufficiently full explanation of the required disqualification by association check required for EYFS staff and those who conduct before- or after-school care for the under-8's. These declarations have been properly undertaken as confirmed in the scrutiny of a sample of staff files during the inspection visit. The policy does not state the school's arrangements for additional safeguards to be undertaken should a member of staff begin work before their DBS check has been seen.

Records of safeguarding and welfare concerns indicate that the school responds appropriately when alerted to any issues by the authorities or parents. They also show that staff report concerns and then monitor pupils considered vulnerable. Whilst safeguarding records are kept securely they are not well organised so do not show clearly developments over time, nor record all liaison between staff, parents and external agencies. Records are not accompanied by a summary which indicates children who are currently the subject of any type of concern.

The suitability of staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraph 18 (2)(d); EYFS requirements 3.9-3.13]

The school does not meet all of the Regulations.

The single central register confirms that all staff have an enhanced DBS check and is accurate in most respects. However, at the time of the visit the school had not undertaken prohibition from teaching checks on visiting staff employed since April 2012, such as peripatetic music teachers and sports coaches. There was no evidence of the employment history of two recently appointed staff and, whilst the school has undertaken a risk assessment and organised supervision when staff started work pending their DBS in several

instances, this was not the case in the most recent appointment of a visiting teacher. Four members of staff promoted recently to a management role and two governors, also recently appointed, have not undergone a prohibition from management check. Staff files are inconsistent in the information they contain and their organisation. The accompanying checklist to ensure that all checks are correctly undertaken does not provide for prohibition from teaching nor management checks. Governors are aware of this shortcoming and say they are currently undertaking an audit of staff files to address it. A member of a staff family over the age of sixteen who occasionally lives on the school premises has an enhanced DBS certificate.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25; EYFS requirements 3.54-3.63]

The school meets all of the Regulations.

The premises are protected from unauthorised visitors by secure radio-controlled gates. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that visitors are signed in and do not have unsupervised access to pupils. These arrangements apply equally to visitors to staff accommodation. The safeguarding audit carried out in January 2016 noted that there is no formal policy requiring visitors to be supervised at all times so this is part of planned improvements to safeguarding arrangements. It was not possible to see the staff occupancy agreement during the visit since it was being revised off-site. However, inspection evidence confirms reference to this document in a contract of employment for staff residency on the school site.

The manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; EYFS requirements 3.74-3.75]

The school does not meet all of the Regulations.

The school's complaints procedure does not comply with regulatory requirements as stated below, although it was recently reviewed. It refers to outdated legislation and does not include the requirements of the EYFS.

When a formal complaint is made, no outside timescale for a response is given in order that parents may know when they may request a panel hearing. The policy provides for a panel hearing including the chair and two other governors rather than comprising of three people who are not directly involved in the matters of the complaint, one of whom is independent of the management and running of the school. Whilst the policy states that the panel will write to the parents, headmaster, governors and, where relevant, the person complained about with its decision, it does not state that a copy of these findings will be available for inspection on the school premises. The policy says that the headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to a formal complaint. However, it does not provide for a record of all complaints made formally to be kept, including specific reference to whether they were resolved under a formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing. It also does not state that records will indicate the actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether they were upheld.

The policy does not specify that written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days. It also does not state that a record of complaints must be made available to ISI on request nor publish details of how to contact ISI if parents believe that the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

Records of formal complaints indicate that the school has largely followed its published procedure but since this was incorrect, any recent complaints proceeding to a panel have not been addressed according to current statutory guidance. Records are not methodically organised, and are limited in most cases to print outs of emails. They therefore do not give

sufficient clarity about chronology and outcomes, for example including a summary sheet to indicate the nature of the concern, relevant dates, resolution and actions taken as a result. Records of a complaint which proceeded to a panel hearing were not available to inspectors until sent into school by the governors. These records confirm that although addressed diligently, the panel hearing was not correctly implemented.

Quality of leadership in and management of schools [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

The school does not meet all of the Regulations.

Since the previous inspection the leadership has undergone a period of instability and governance has had a radical overhaul. The leadership and staff tasked with ensuring that policies and procedures are correct are not yet well-established in their roles. Governors and the leadership hold the well-being of pupils as a key priority and governors play an active part in supporting and monitoring the school's progress in relation to statutory responsibilities. However, the absence of revisions to the complaints policy and omissions and inaccuracies in the safeguarding and recruitment policies demonstrate that governors and the leadership do not currently have a sufficiently strong up-to-date knowledge to ensure that the standards are consistently met through rigorous monitoring.

Regulatory action points

The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, Health and Safety, paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS requirements 3.4, 3.9; 3.11 and 3.12

- Improve the safeguarding policy as follows: [paragraph 7(a), (b)]
 - remove all out-dated references in the school's safeguarding policy;
 - remove repetition so that the policy gives clear and succinct guidance;
 - ensure that clear referral pathways are given which acknowledge contact with the relevant authorities for advice and distinguish between the school's response to children at risk and those in need;
 - indicate that the school contributes to inter-agency working in accordance with the its LSCB (for example co-ordinated offer of early help for pupils);
 - state that the school will refer possible abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil to an external safeguarding agency;
 - give clear contact details for the DSLs and safeguarding governor;
 - give contact details for advice and support about extremism;
 - ensure that definitions and categories of abuse fully match those in KCSIE and remove any which do not;
 - acknowledge the school's mandatory duty to report FGM to the local police;
 - ensure the staff code of conduct fully reflects the school's context;
 - include reference to guidance for visiting speaker protocol
 - [For the EYFS] include the restrictions placed on the use of mobile phones and cameras. [EYFS 3.4]
- Improve the recruitment policy as follows:
 - remove outdated references so that it follows KCSIE guidance;

- include the protocol for checking visiting speakers
- include the circumstances which require a prohibition from management check; [also paragraph 18.2(b)]
- make clear disqualification by association and ensure it covers all the required staff;
- include arrangements to risk assess and supervise any staff who start work pending the arrival of their DBS; [also paragraph 18.3]
- Improve implementation of the safeguarding policy as follows:
 - ensure that minutes of the governors' annual review of safeguarding are sufficiently detailed to demonstrate rigour;
 - stipulate the content of the induction programme for new staff, and record when it has taken place;
 - improve the record-keeping of safeguarding concerns, so that it is clear which involve liaison with external agencies and which are being monitored within school
- ensure that all the required checks such as of employment history are undertaken before they start work; [paragraph 7(a), (b); EYFS 3.9; 3.11;3.12]

ISSR Part 4, The suitability of staff and proprietors, paragraphs 18 and 21; EYFS requirements 3.9, 3.11; 3.12]

- ensure that prohibition from teaching checks are carried out on any staff who undertake teaching work including visiting staff; [paragraph 18(2)(b); 21(3)(b); EYFS 3.9; 3.12]
- ensure that prohibition from management checks are carried out on governors and any staff appointed to management positions; [paragraphs 18(2)(b); 20(3)(a)(ii); 21(3)(a)(iii)]

ISSR Part 7, The manner in which complaints are handled, paragraph 33; EYFS requirements 3.74-3.75

- Revise and implement the school's complaints procedure, in particular:
 - clearly state the outside timescale for resolution of a complaint at stage 2; [paragraph 33 (c)]
 - state that a panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint; [paragraph 33 (f)]
 - state and ensure that one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school; [paragraph 33 (g)]
 - provide for a copy of the panel findings and recommendations to be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher; [paragraph 33 (i) (ii)]
 - state and ensure that a written record is kept of all complaints made under the formal procedure stating whether they were resolved at the formal procedure or preceded to a panel hearing; [paragraph 33 (j)(i)]
 - provide that the written record indicates the action taken by the school as a result for these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); [paragraph 33 (j) (ii)]

- amend the legislation referred to to section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act. [paragraph 33 (k)]
- Indicate additional EYFS requirements as follows:
 - state that written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days; [EYFS 3.74]
 - state that the record of complaints will be made available to ISI on request; [EYFS 3.74]
 - provide contact details for ISI if parents believe the provider is not meeting EYFS requirements. [EYFS 3.75]

ISSR Part 8, Quality of leadership in and management of schools, paragraph 34

- Ensure that governors and the leadership fulfil their responsibilities to monitor compliance with regulations and ensure they are met effectively by:
 - rigorous consideration of changes to regulations;
 - regular and rigorous review of safeguarding, recruitment and complaints policies and procedures;

prompt implementation of actions to meet changes in regulations.