



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Additional Inspection Report**

**Exeter Cathedral School**

**April 2023**

## School's details

<b>School</b>	Exeter Cathedral School		
<b>DfE number</b>	878/6000		
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1151444		
<b>Address</b>	Exeter Cathedral School The Chantry Palace Gate Exeter Devon EX1 1HX		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 255298		
<b>Email address</b>	reception@exetercs.org		
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr James Featherstone		
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Derek Phillips		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Exeter Cathedral School Ltd.		
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 13		
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	273		
	<b>Day pupils</b>	261	<b>Boarders</b> 12
	<b>EYFS</b>	29	<b>Pre-Prep</b> 66
	<b>Prep</b>	178	
<b>Date of inspection</b>	20 April 2023		

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Exeter Cathedral School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between two and thirteen years. Founded in 1179 to educate male choristers at the cathedral, non-choristers were admitted in the 1960s and the school became co-educational in 1994. The choristers are now both male and female. The school is a limited company and registered charity, overseen by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school comprises nursery, which includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting, pre-preparatory and preparatory departments. There is one boarding house with separate accommodation for female and male boarders. Boarders may board full time, weekly or flexibly.
- 1.3 Twenty-three pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Eight pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for four pupils. The school's previous inspection was an education quality and focused compliance inspection, which took place in May 2019.

### Purpose of the inspection

- 1.4 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 2022 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8;	<b>Not all met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid); NMS 7	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision); NMS 20	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	<b>Not met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints); NMS 14	<b>Not met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS2	<b>Not met</b>

## 2. Inspection findings

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 8]**

#### **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 meets the standards.
- 2.4 The school implements its arrangements effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils throughout the school.
- 2.5 Staff support pupils effectively taking into account their needs and circumstances. During discussions pupils stated strongly that there is a wide range of staff they can talk to if they are worried or concerned. They feel listened to and say that appropriate action is taken when required in response to their concerns. Pupils are given suitable guidance with regard to staying safe online and use of technology is safeguarded appropriately, including the monitoring of internet access. Safeguarding matters are suitably overseen by a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who is a member of the senior leadership team and who is supported effectively by deputy DSLs. Senior leaders keep appropriately confidential records of pupils at risk or in need of early help. These demonstrate that senior leaders operate within the requirements of the local authority safeguarding partnership, maintaining close links with external agencies including, when necessary, the local designated officer (LADO), the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and the police. The staff code of conduct is comprehensive and suitable. During discussions staff demonstrated that they knew and understood the code of conduct including the requirements for accessing social media.
- 2.6 Staff demonstrate effective understanding of their responsibilities and are suitably trained, including being regularly updated in safeguarding procedures. The DSL and deputies have received and updated their training at the correct level. Staff demonstrate strong understanding of safeguarding requirements including abuse linked to the protected characteristics and child-on-child abuse. They know the pupils well, effectively taking into account the particular vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND. Senior leaders respond effectively and promptly when safeguarding concerns are raised. Suitable assessments of risk to vulnerable pupils are made where needed. Appropriate arrangements for managing allegations against staff are included in the safeguarding policy and implemented and recorded appropriately. Staff interviewed understood the procedures for reporting low-level and other concerns including whistleblowing.
- 2.7 All governors have completed appropriate safeguarding training and there is a suitable review of safeguarding policy and procedures.
- 2.8 As the school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards as outlined below, the school does not meet paragraph 8(b).

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – first aid [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13; NMS 7]**

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.

- 2.10 The school has a suitable policy in place for first aid which is implemented appropriately. Staff are appropriately trained in first aid. First aid procedures, equipment and records are effectively overseen and monitored by medical and sports staff including for off-site visits and sports fixtures. Records confirm that appropriate action is taken when illness or injuries occur.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 20]**

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 Records indicate that pupils are suitably supervised including for off site visits and fixtures. Appropriate staff ratios are maintained including ensuring that there are always sufficient first aiders available.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 9]**

- 2.13 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.14 The school has a suitable risk assessment policy in place and staff have received appropriate training in risk assessment. Suitable risk assessments are in place and implemented effectively in relation to the school premises, pupil supervision and welfare. However, leadership and governance have not considered sufficiently the wider aspects of risk assessment at a strategic level, in particular the risks associated with responding to complaints independently outside of the school's complaints policy and procedures.

### **Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; NMS 14]**

- 2.15 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.16 The school has a suitable complaints policy with clear timescales for responding to a complaint. Records are kept appropriately and indicate that complaints handled by the leadership of the school have been managed in accordance with the school's policy and procedures. These include a three-stage process consisting of informal and formal complaints, and a hearing before a panel of three people not involved in the complaint, one of whom is independent of the leadership and management of the school. However, in a recent case governors managed a complaint outside of the school's published policy and procedures. Despite concern being expressed by the leadership of the school and other governors, those concerned did not share information appropriately and this situation was not rectified in a timely manner. Suitable arrangements are made to handle boarders' complaints.

### **Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]**

- 2.17 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.18 Senior leaders and governors actively promote the wellbeing of pupils. However, some governors have not demonstrated sufficient knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities so that the independent school standards are met consistently. Monitoring of the effectiveness of the implementation of the school's policies is not sufficiently rigorous including all the policies required by Appendix A of the NMS.

### 3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022 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 – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 9; EYFS 3.65]**

- The school must ensure that leadership and governance implement a strategic view of risk assessment, in particular with regard to the way complaints are handled, to ensure that appropriate actions are taken to identify, manage and reduce risks identified [paragraph 16(a) and (b); NMS 9.3 and for the same reason paragraph 8(b); EYFS 3.65].

#### **ISSR Part 7, Manner in which complaints are handled. [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; NMS 14; EYFS 3.75]**

- The school must ensure that all elements of its complaints policy and procedures are implemented fully and consistently [paragraph 33(c) to (j); NMS 14.1 and for the same reason paragraph 8(b); EYFS 3.75].

#### **ISSR Part 8, Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]**

- The school must ensure that senior leaders and governors have the knowledge and skills required to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and that they implement suitable monitoring procedures, including with regard to ensuring those policies required by Appendix A of the NMS are followed, so that the standards are met consistently [paragraph 34 (1)(a) and (b); NMS 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 and 2.7].

## 4. Summary of evidence

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

### Inspectors

Dr Patricia Preedy

Reporting inspector

Mr Patrick Wenham

Assistant reporting inspector