

## Kingshott School

Stevenage Road, St Ippolyts, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 7JX

**Date of visit** 15 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), particularly those concerned with the welfare, health and safety of pupils; the manner in which complaints are handled; the knowledge, skills and effectiveness of the governance and leadership.

### **Characteristics of the School**

Kingshott School is a co-educational preparatory school, near Hitchin in Hertfordshire, for pupils aged three to thirteen. The school is a registered charity administered by a board of governors. On 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the deputy head was appointed as acting head.

The school aims to inspire all pupils to be the best they can be within a happy, safe and stimulating environment. The total number of pupils in the school at the time of the visit was 413. There are 78 pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school has identified 81 pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), of whom 70 receive specialist support. No pupils have been identified as requiring support for English as an additional language.

The previous inspection was in February 2013.

### **Inspection findings**

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

The school does not meet the Regulation.

The safeguarding/child protection policy in place at the time of the visit shows concern for pupils but the arrangements described in it do not fully reflect the latest statutory guidance.

This policy requires a further review by the governing body. The previous policy was reviewed by a full governing body in June 2015; weaknesses in the policy had not been identified. The school fully understands the improvements required for the policy and the need for subsequent procedures to be implemented. In order for the policy to be implemented fully, staff will require further training. The safeguarding procedures are monitored effectively by the recently appointed governor for safeguarding who is working closely with the newly-appointed DSL. The inspection found that the new monitoring procedures are thorough and staff are fully aware of weaknesses that were evident in the past.

The school documentation and staff interviews confirmed that staff had received a copy of KCSIE Part 1, and had signed to say they had read and understood it. The staff are in possession of the school's code of conduct and understand the guidance given. The teaching staff have been given instructions on the suitable use of the media for teaching and the promotion of suitable topics for developing pupil's personal development.

The procedure for reporting concerns has not always been clearly followed. Concerns regarding the head have not always been reported to the Chair of Governors although staff understood the requirement to do so. Staff reported that they are now clear about reporting procedures and would feel comfortable reporting any concerns to the current Chair of Governors if they involved the head. They understood the need to report other concerns to the DSL, unless they involve the DSL. The Chair of Governors has followed the correct procedures for reporting concerns to the LADO and has followed the advice given. It was not possible to examine the documentation regarding referrals during the visit as the Chair of Governors explained he held them elsewhere.

Appropriate records of staff training are kept to identify who has been trained, when and by whom. Staff received updated safeguarding training in the autumn term of 2015. A small number of staff are still to be trained in the current strategy to prevent radicalisation. The DSL was trained by the local authority in October 2015. The school has yet to appoint a deputy DSL. The governors were trained in safeguarding in February 2016.

The safeguarding records are kept securely. However, they do not contain the required detail and do not record the procedures put in place for monitoring, or whether some of the incidents had been referred to the children's services. They did not always indicate whether they had been resolved or what actions had been taken. The governing body now oversees and monitors the procedures and requires thorough safeguarding reports for their meetings. They acknowledged that previous reports lacked sufficient detail.

Pupils reported in interview that they would take any concerns they had to their form teacher or to a senior member of staff and feel confident they would be handled well. Pupils reported that they felt safe in school.

With regard to *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (March 2015) the school did not meet the required standards regarding promoting a culture where staff felt comfortable reporting concerns. At the time of the inspection visit, the school had tried to remedy this weakness. The school has an appropriate whistleblowing policy and procedure. The policy is suitably referenced in staff training for safeguarding and in the code of conduct. It was not possible during the visit to verify that training had taken place in whistleblowing procedures. Staff interviewed reported that although they did not feel comfortable reporting concerns in the past, they felt confident that they could report concerns in future. The Chair of Governors explained that he had received one whistleblowing report from a member of staff. Due to documentation being unavailable, it was not possible to verify that the governors had adhered to the procedures outlined in the policy.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14]**

The school does not meet the Regulation.

The school has a suitable policy for the safety of pupils on school trips and activities out of school. The evidence provided regarding some overseas trips indicated that, on a few occasions, the level of supervision throughout the visit was not according to the school policy and that pupils were left without adequate supervision by the school. The pupils were not always given suitable school supervision during air travel home from overseas trips.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16]**

The school does not meet the Regulation.

The school has a suitable risk assessment policy and appropriate risk assessments are required for school trips, visits and activities outside of school. In the majority of cases, the risk assessments completed by staff are sufficiently detailed. However, the risk assessments completed for some overseas trips and activities are inadequate. The school has not sufficiently monitored the quality of such risk assessments to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils.

### **The manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33 (f) (h) (i) (j)]**

The school does not meet the Regulation.

The school now has an appropriate complaints policy. During the visit the policy required an amendment regarding the recording of complaints and whether they had been resolved satisfactorily and at what stage. During the visit it was not possible to examine documents regarding formal complaints or those requiring a panel hearing. No evidence was available to show that the school had implemented the complaints policy procedure to hold a panel hearing within published time-scales. The school did not have an adequate record of concerns and complaints made to the school.

### **Leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (a), (b) and (c)]**

The school does not meet the Regulation.

The evidence available from the visit and the documentation inspected indicates that the school has not fully implemented the school policies regarding welfare, health and safety and the manner in which complaints are handled. Evidence indicates that in the past the governors and leadership had the knowledge and skills to fulfil their obligations. However, they did not always do so, with particular regard to their responsibilities for safeguarding and in actively promoting pupil's well-being. The current governing body and leadership have ensured that the policies and procedures are now under review, any weaknesses identified and intend that the new policies will be carefully implemented.

### **Regulatory action points**

The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

#### **ISSR Part 3 paragraph 7 (a) and (b) Welfare, Health and Safety**

- Ensure the arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils follow current statutory guidance.
- Improve the wording and implementation of the safeguarding policy as follows:
  - Give contact details for children's social care (using the local name) for use in relation to children in need of help or who are the focus of concern. Give clear contact details for the designated senior leader (DSL), deputy DSL and nominated governor.
  - Give contact details for advice and support about extremism e.g., Local Authority (LA) Prevent lead in priority areas, local police)
  - Describe the function of the local authority designated officer (LADO) in providing advice and presiding over the investigation of any allegation or suspicion of abuse directed against anyone working in the school.
  - Indicate that the school contributes to inter-agency working in accordance with its local safeguarding children board (LSCB).
  - Give guidance for staff who have concerns that a child may be in need or at risk.

- State that all allegations are reported to the LADO immediately and within one working day at the latest.
  - Be clear that if a crime may have been committed, the matter should be reported to the police.
  - Give a clear account of the way allegations or suspicions of abuse are reported in the school: staff and volunteers to the DSL; DSL to the head; and the head to the proprietor/Chair of Governors or nominated governor without informing the head; an allegation against the head should be reported straight to the Chair of Governors.
  - Outline the main responsibilities of the DSL as outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* July 2015.
  - Stipulate that induction training includes the school whistle-blowing procedures/policy.
  - In the EYFS outline the restrictions placed on the use of mobile phones and cameras and ensure these apply to the setting.
- Ensure the governing body report to the DBS and NCTL all safeguarding concerns involving staff members.
  - Ensure all staff are trained in the revised procedures of the safeguarding policy.
  - Ensure lines of reporting for concerns are clear and followed appropriately.
  - Ensure safeguarding records are fully documented, detailing the timeline, the actions taken and whether they have been resolved.
  - Ensure all staff and governors are fully trained in the school's whistleblowing policy and procedures.

**ISSR Part 3 paragraph 14 Welfare, Health and Safety**

- Ensure that pupils are properly supervised through appropriate deployment of school staff on school trips, visits and activities outside of school.

**ISSR Part 3 paragraph 16 Welfare, Health and Safety**

- Ensure that appropriate risk assessments are drawn up, implemented and monitored, for school trips, visits and activities outside of school.

**ISSR Part 7 paragraph 33 (f) (h) (j) (i) and (ii) The manner in which complaints are handled**

- Ensure the school implements its complaints policy effectively and in accordance with its outlined procedures.
- Keep written records of all complaints and record whether they were resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to panel hearing and what action is taken by the school as a result of these complaints regardless of whether they are upheld.

**ISSR Part 8 paragraph 34 (a) (b) and (c)The Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- Ensure the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities with regard to welfare, health and safety of pupils and actively promote the well-being of pupils; and in the manner in which complaints are handled.