Report for an Additional Inspection

School name	Aurora Eccles School
DfE number	926/6041
Address	Aurora Eccles School Quidenham Norwich Norfolk NR16 2NZ
Headteacher	Mr Chris Brown
Proprietor	The Aurora Group
Number of pupils on roll	152

	Boys	115	**Girls**	37
	Day pupils	145	**Boarders**	7
	EYFS	0	**Juniors**	31
	Seniors	119	**Sixth Form**	2

Date of visit	28 June 2019

1.   Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1.1   Aurora Eccles School is an independent day and boarding school which provides specialist education from the ages of three to nineteen years. It has been owned by the Aurora Group Ltd since March 2017, and the executive team of the group provide governance of the school. The school comprises an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), junior department and senior department including the sixth form. However, there were no EYFS pupils registered at the school at the time of this visit. The boarding accommodation consists of two boarding houses and is inspected separately by Ofsted.

1.2   The school has 152 pupils, all of whom require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and 141 pupils have an education, health and care plan. Two pupils speak English as an additional language. Seven pupils are boarders, one full-time and the others on a flexible basis. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in October 2017, and its residential provision was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2019.

Purpose of the visit

1.3   This was an unannounced additional visit 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).

Regulations which are the focus of the visit/inspection	Team judgements
ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 (curriculum, teaching and framework for assessment)	**Not Met**
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	**Not Met**
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour)	**Not Met**
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying)	**Not Met**
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	**Not Met**
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision)	**Not Met**
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15 (admissions and attendance)	**Met**
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	**Not Met**
ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32 (1)(c) (provision of information)	**Met**
ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints)	**Met**
ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	**Not Met**

2 Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum, teaching and framework for assessment [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4]

2.1   The school does not meet all of the standards.

2.2   The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. However, there is insufficient evidence available from the school to indicate that it is being implemented effectively. Similarly, there is a lack of evidence available from the school to show that 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 not in place.

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

Safeguarding policy

2.3   The school meets the requirement.

2.4   The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. The policy has due regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE September 2018) and is appropriate for the specific needs of the school.

Safeguarding implementation

2.5   The school does not meet the standard.

2.6   In September 2018 staff received the most recent copy of Part 1 of the revised guidance, and relevant staff have been issued with Annex A. They have signed to confirm that they have received and read the documents, and the school has taken steps to ensure that staff understand them through staff meetings held at the start of the autumn term, and on-line assessment tasks. The associated whistleblowing and safe recruitment policies, and the staff code of conduct, also meet current requirements. Staff interviewed displayed good awareness of safeguarding policy advice and requirements, including appropriate consideration of the special educational needs of the pupils.

2.7   The school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the governing body have undertaken an annual audit of safeguarding procedures. The higher-level training for the DSL and deputy DSL is up to date. The DSL is aware of local referral thresholds. Induction training for new staff includes the issue of all the required documents and recently appointed staff confirm they have received these along with specific associated training. In addition, staff have taken part in a range of additional training opportunities, both on-line and face-to-face, during the last school year. These have covered aspects such as awareness of peer-on-peer abuse, extremism and radicalisation issues. The on-line safety of pupils is a high priority and recent guidance and training for staff and pupils indicates an appropriate focus on both the safeguarding and technological aspects of the use and misuse of digital media, and suitable filtering systems are in place.

2.8   Welfare concerns raised by staff are efficiently and accurately logged by the DSL. Senior leaders and the chair of governors confirmed their appropriate engagement in safeguarding matters which have occurred since the previous inspection. This is supported by documentary evidence. There is a designated governor for safeguarding who maintains close liaison with the DSL.

2.9   However, safeguarding is not implemented effectively, because the school does not ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils. In particular, evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that although there has been training for staff regarding peer-on-peer abuse, it is not prevented from occurring, nor dealt with effectively.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour management, bullying, health and safety, supervision, admission and attendance registers and risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 14, 15 and 16]

2.10   The school does not meet all of the standards.

2.11   Attendance and admission registers are maintained, as required.

2.12   Arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are insufficiently effective. Good behaviour is not promoted sufficiently, nor is bullying prevented so far as reasonably practicable. Health and safety requirements are not met, particularly those regarding pupils' safety on the school site as pupils are not properly supervised. A strategic approach to risk assessment is not fully implemented. Risk assessments across the site are insufficient to suggest appropriate action to be taken to reduce risks which are identified.

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

2.13   The school meets the requirement.

2.14   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]

2.15   The school meets the standard.

2.16   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 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.

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

2.17   The school does not meet the standard.

2.18   The standard relating to the leadership and management of the school is not met, because the proprietor has not ensured that those with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the requisite standards are met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

3 Regulatory action points

3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 1, Quality of education provided - paragraphs 2, 3 and 4

- Ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively and that the teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources [paragraph 2 (1)(a) and paragraph 3 (a), (f) and (h)].

- Ensure a suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place [paragraph 3 (g) and paragraph 4].

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding, paragraph 7

- Ensure that the safeguarding policy is implemented effectively by putting in place arrangements which fully support the welfare, health and safety of pupils, notably by addressing any instances of peer-on-peer abuse [paragraph 7 (a) and (b)].

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour and bullying, health and safety, supervision, admission and attendance registers and risk assessment - paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 14, 15 and 16

- Ensure that good behaviour is promoted and bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable [paragraphs 9 and 10].

- Ensure that health and safety requirements are met, particularly those aspects regarding pupils' safety on the school site [paragraph 11].

- Ensure that pupils are properly supervised at all times [paragraph 14].

- Ensure that a strategic approach to risk assessment by implementing a suitable, whole-site risk assessment [paragraph 16 (a) and (b)].

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

- The proprietor must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that all the standards are met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils [paragraph 34 (1)(a), (b) and (c)].

4. Summary of evidence

Written materials

- Safeguarding policy
- Sample risk assessments (in school, visits out, overnight)
- The code of conduct for staff
- Governors' minutes with regard to the annual review of the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures
- Complaints procedure;
- Parents handbook;
- Curriculum policy, including arrangements for SEND;
- Behaviour policy;
- Anti-bullying policy;
- Supervision policy;
- Health and safety policy;
- Risk assessment policy;
- Admissions and attendance policy;
- Records and correspondence relating to safeguarding/behavioural incidents and bullying;
- Log of sanctions and evidence of monitoring;
- Evidence of referrals/consultations [Children's Services, local authority designated officer (LADO), Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)];
- Evidence of allegations reported to head and to the chair of governors;
- Record of safeguarding training for head and all staff;
- Governors' minutes with regard to the annual review of the child protection policy and procedures;
- Log of complaints, stage of resolution, parental communications and school replies;
- Attendance registers;
- Supervision rotas;
- Records of pupil progress, attainment and achievement, EHCPs, IEPs and annual reviews.

Meetings with school personnel

- Introductory meeting with head – to discuss arrangements for the day and to provide initial thoughts on areas specified as focus for the visit;
- Meeting with the DSL – to discuss implementation of safeguarding policy, training and induction of new staff;
- Meeting with the head of care – to discuss behaviour, bullying, supervision, internal attendance (registration);

- Meeting with the head of learning – to discuss curriculum, teaching and provision for SEND, including records of pupils' progress, attainment and achievement, EHCPs, ISPs;

- Meeting with head – to discuss complaints;

- Meeting with site manager – to discuss health and safety and risk assessment;

- Meeting with a total of five teaching and non-teaching staff, selected by inspectors - to discuss their training, safeguarding pupils and promoting e-safety, and contact with parents.

Activities on site

- Further scrutiny and evaluation of implementation of policies and documentation (as detailed above);

- Tour of the school;

- Meeting with eight secondary pupils, selected by inspectors - to explore what it is like to be a pupil at the school;

- Telephone discussion with chief executive officer representing proprietor;

- Meeting of inspectors;

- Meeting with the head to feedback and explain findings.