



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Mount House School

November 2021

School's details

School name	Mount House School		
DfE number	302/6014		
Address	Mount House School Camlet Way Hadley Wood Hertfordshire EN4 0NJ		
Telephone number	020 8449 6889		
Email address	office@mounthouse.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Richardson		
Chair of governors	Dr Colin Diggory		
Age Range	11 to 19		
Number of pupils on roll	211		
	Seniors	187	6th Form 24
Date of visit	05 November 2021		

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Mount House School is an independent co-educational day school. Established in June 2017 as the successor to St Martha's School for female pupils which was founded in 1903, it is situated in a rural setting in Hadley Wood in the London Borough of Barnet. Male pupils have been admitted since September 2018. There are 18 pupils who have English as an additional language. The school has identified 54 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia and dyspraxia. There are 7 pupils with an education, health and care plan. The school's previous inspection was an additional inspection in December 2020.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 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).

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 15 (admission and attendance registers)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 3, Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 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 meets the standard.
- 2.4 The school has suitable procedures in place to ensure the effective implementation of the safeguarding policy. All staff, including those with designated responsibilities have undertaken appropriate training within statutory timescales. All staff have read and understood the most recent version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. Staff understand their responsibilities and are fully aware of the procedures for reporting alleged sexual harassment and sexual violence. Induction for new staff includes appropriate safeguarding training, the staff code of conduct and whistleblowing procedures. Staff expressed a clear understanding of the code of conduct and the expectations for their behaviour towards pupils. Staff express confidence in the school's whistleblowing procedures and say they would, if the need arose, make a referral directly to the local safeguarding partnership. Detailed records of training are kept. Staff have a secure understanding of the definitions of abuse, including peer-on-peer, and the particular vulnerabilities of different groups, such as those with SEND.
- 2.5 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is well known to staff and pupils and has the status and authority to act independently. They act in the best interest of pupils at all times. Provision is made to listen to pupils' concerns and give them a response. Pupils confirmed that they feel able to approach staff if they have a concern. Records indicate that the DSL takes appropriate steps, promptly and effectively, to seek early help or make referrals to the appropriate agencies, including the police. Allegations against staff are referred promptly to the local authority designated officer (LADO) with all subsequent actions carefully, and thoroughly, documented. Records confirm that, when required, the school acts promptly to make a referral to statutory agencies including to the Disclosure and Barring Service and Teaching Regulation Agency. The school takes all appropriate steps to ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times in safeguarding cases, with information shared only with those that need to know.
- 2.6 Pupils receive suitable guidance regarding online safety and the school has installed internet filters to identify and monitor inappropriate use of digital technology.
- 2.7 Governors receive suitable safeguarding training safeguarding. There is a comprehensive annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures by the board of governors who receive regular reports from the DSL and designated safeguarding governor. Governors review any serious safeguarding incidents appropriately and confidentially. They ensure any necessary actions to improve procedures are taken.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9]

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.
- 2.9 The school's behaviour policy sets out clearly the school's commitment to positive behaviour which includes suitable rewards and an escalating tariff of sanctions. Records of sanctions, maintained with the appropriate level of detail, are monitored and discussed by senior pastoral staff. Pupils say that

poor behaviour is usually limited to low-level disruption, not listening or failing to complete homework. Inspection evidence confirms this. Pupils confirm that generally they get on well with one another, and that staff are consistent in the awarding of rewards and sanctions.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10]

2.10 The school meets the standard.

2.11 The school takes bullying seriously and has implemented suitable measures to combat bullying which are set out in the anti-bullying policy. Pupils are given guidance about bullying in tutor times, assemblies and personal, social and health education. Staff and pupils are instructed to report bullying immediately and the school ensures that all incidents are recorded. This happens and parents are involved in anti-bullying measures effectively. Patterns are quickly identified and the threshold at which bullying is to be regarded as a safeguarding concern is clear. Records of bullying incidents demonstrate that the school thoroughly investigates these and puts a range of suitable measures in place to support victims and perpetrators alike. Pupils told inspectors that incidents of bullying are infrequent and are addressed effectively by staff. Records confirm this. Pupils are alert to the signs of cyber-bullying and receive appropriate advice on how to stay safe online.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11]

2.12 The school meets the standard.

2.13 The school takes appropriate steps to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils, staff and visitors through the effective implementation of a suitable health and safety policy. Health and safety procedures throughout the school are robust and effective. Suitably qualified and experienced staff oversee all aspects of health and safety. Servicing and safety checks are carried out at suitable intervals. External consultants are used where appropriate for asbestos, electrical and water surveys. Maintenance logs indicate that prompt action is taken to ensure repairs and remedial actions are completed in a timely fashion to minimise any impact on pupil safety. Senior staff and proprietors maintain close oversight of health and safety matters. The health and safety committee meets each term to review any incidents, identify training needs and scrutinise risk assessments, including those for trips.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12]

2.14 The school meets the standard.

2.15 The school takes appropriate steps to ensure the well-being of pupils through the effective implementation of a suitable fire safety policy. Fire safety records, associated logs and the fire risk assessment are up to date and demonstrate that the school gives suitable priority to fire safety. Suitable evacuation routes are indicated clearly. Fire evacuation procedures are well known to staff and pupils due to regular fire drills which are conducted at different times of the day. Testing of fire alarms and emergency lighting is carefully documented, following a suitable maintenance schedule.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – first aid [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13]

2.16 The school meets the standard.

2.17 The school makes suitable provision who are unwell or injured. First aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy, and by ensuring sufficient staff are trained to an appropriate level.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14]

- 2.18 The school meets the standard.
- 2.19 The school implements an appropriate supervision policy that ensures pupils are suitably monitored throughout the day. There is a comprehensive duty rota and cover list for supervision before and after school; at break and lunch times; clubs; and on trips. This helps to ensure that sufficient staff are always available to pupils. Staff understand that it is everyone's responsibility to keep pupils safe.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – admission and attendance registers [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15]

- 2.20 The school meets the standard.
- 2.21 Admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16]

- 2.22 The school meets the standard.
- 2.23 The school implements a comprehensive risk assessment policy effectively. A full range of risk assessments covers all aspects of the school's accommodation, facilities and provision, including for science laboratories. Senior staff review and revise risk assessments on a regular basis and staff understand the importance of an ongoing dynamic approach to risk, including for vulnerable pupils. Staff receive training in risk assessment as part of their induction and in follow up health and safety briefings. Individual risk assessments are completed for outings.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – accessibility plan [Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010]

- 2.24 The school fulfil its duties under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. It has and implements a suitable accessibility plan.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21]

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.
- 2.26 The school takes all appropriate steps to ensure the suitability of staff by completing all required checks on each employee prior to appointment and recording these checks on the single central record of appointments.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32]

- 2.27 The school meets the standard.
- 2.28 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33]

2.29 The school meets the standard.

2.30 Parental complaints are handled effectively through a suitable 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 which are adhered to. 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 and whether or not a complaint is successful.

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

2.31 The school meets the standard.

2.32 Senior leaders and governors demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and as a result fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Governors provide effective oversight of the school's activities and the implementation of its policies to ensure the school meets all requirements. They keep up to date with changes to the regulatory framework so that they can monitor compliance. These measures promote the well-being and education of pupils.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this visit, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

4. Summary of evidence

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