



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Additional Inspection Report

Sherfield School

December 2022

School's details

School	Sherfield School			
DfE number	850/6084			
Early Years registration number	EY293642			
Address	Sherfield School Reading Road Sherfield-on-Loddon Hook Hampshire RG27 0HU			
Telephone number	01256 884800			
Email address	hmpa@sherfieldschool.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Nicholas Brain			
Proprietor	GEMS UK			
Age Range	0 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	609			
	Day pupils	533	Boarders	76
	EYFS	111	Prep yrs 1–8	274
	Seniors yrs 9–11	157	Sixth Form	67
Date of inspection	14 December 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1.1 Sherfield School is a co-educational day and boarding school situated in the village of Sherfield-on-Loddon, to the northeast of Basingstoke. The school was founded as a boarding school for female pupils in 1947, with the current school opening in 2004. The school is governed by Bellevue Education and is owned by Global Educational Management Systems UK. The school has three sections: a nursery and reception for children from three months to four years of age which includes the registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting; a prep school for pupils in Years 1 to 8; and a senior school for pupils in Years 9 to 13. Boarding is available from Year 4 onwards. The school has identified 124 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 46 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a material change inspection in October 2021.

Purpose of the inspection

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), 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; EYFS 3.4–3.7	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 9 (behaviour) and 10 (bullying); NMS 15 and 16; EYFS 3.53	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 9; NMS 3.55	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire); NMS 10; EYFS 3.56	Met
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid); NMS 7; EYFS 3.25	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision); NMS 20; EYFS 3.28–3.31	Met
Part 3, paragraph 15 (admission and attendance registers)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9; EYFS 3.65 and 3.66	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 30 (premises and accommodation); NMS 4; EYFS 3.55 and 3.61	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints); NMS 14; EYFS 3.75 and 3.76	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7 and 8; NMS 8; EYFS 3.4–3.7]

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 standards and the requirements.
- 2.4 Implementation of all aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support for the needs of pupils, including those with SEND and children in the EYFS.
- 2.5 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs provide sufficient cover for the requirements of the role across the school, including in the EYFS. They and all other staff are suitably trained in accordance with statutory and local guidance. Those who spoke to the inspectors displayed understanding of the staff code of conduct and whistleblowing policies and their safeguarding responsibilities and procedures. They have a suitable knowledge of the thresholds for reporting safeguarding concerns and the safeguarding policy provides detailed contacts for local agencies. Those with safeguarding responsibilities have an effective relationship with the children's services and with the local authority designated safeguarding officer (LADO). They make suitable referrals when appropriate. Senior leaders are suitably involved in monitoring and supporting pupils' wellbeing in association with external agencies when concerns arise outside of school.
- 2.6 The DSL holds comprehensive and suitable electronic records of all safeguarding issues which enable staff to effectively track individual incidents involving pupils. These also allow efficient oversight and monitoring of safeguarding management by the proprietorial body. They receive regular reports as well as conducting an appropriate annual review of safeguarding. They require suitable recruitment procedures for new staff. Regular meetings are held by the pastoral team and safeguarding is discussed weekly with all relevant staff.
- 2.7 Pupils spoken to during the inspection confirmed that they receive guidance on how to respond to issues if they arise. There is a prominent reporting button on the school's home page for pupils to use if they have a concern. Pupils receive a response if they express a concern and action is taken when necessary. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. There are various ways in which relevant guidance is delivered, including through lessons, assemblies and specialist talks. The school implements appropriate procedures to monitor and filter technology. These produce daily reports for the DSL and the proprietorial body provides appropriate oversight of this area.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour and bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 9 and 10; NMS 15 and 16; EYFS 3.53]

- 2.8 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.9 Suitable measures to promote good behaviour are implemented effectively. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they consider misbehaviour to be rare. They feel that any issues are dealt with quickly and appropriately, including any which relate to pupils with protected characteristics, including race. This is confirmed by logs of behavioural incidents. These are kept electronically and patterns are

tracked and monitored effectively by the pastoral leadership team. The policy to promote good behaviour is detailed and includes responsibilities and expectations of pupils as well as rewards and sanctions given. Written records show that senior leaders work closely with pupils with SEND and their parents and maintain open channels of communication. Pupils' individual needs are taken into account with regard to handling behavioural incidents, including where any individual pupil has difficulties with behaviour management.

- 2.10 The school has a detailed anti-bullying policy which includes all appropriate guidance for pupils and parents. Staff receive appropriate training in anti-bullying procedures. There are different approaches in the different phases of the school and issues which arise are dealt with in an age-appropriate manner. The needs of individual pupils involved, including any with SEND, are considered appropriately. The school supports both the perpetrator and victim in any bullying incidents. There are comprehensive electronic records of bullying incidents which are kept, tracked and monitored. All staff have the facility to input information onto these records. Pupils spoken to during the inspection are confident that the school deals promptly with any issues that arise. Senior leaders are aware of the thresholds where bullying becomes a safeguarding matter and respond appropriately.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 9; EYFS 3.55]

- 2.11 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.12 Senior leaders ensure that an effective health and safety policy is implemented. All relevant laws are complied with. Records show that all required testing is systematically undertaken, including the daily checks required in the facilities for the youngest pupils. Any hazards identified are dealt with promptly and effectively. Training for staff is comprehensive and logs show this is timely and appropriate, including for staff within the boarding house. Effective monitoring is in place to identify trends and mitigate incidents.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 10; EYFS 3.56]

- 2.13 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.14 The school has a suitable fire prevention strategy and a fire risk assessment which covers all accommodation. Fire procedures are overseen by a suitably competent person. They are understood by staff and pupils, who all have training provided. Regular fire drills are undertaken and recorded, including in boarding time.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – first aid [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13; NMS 7; EYFS 3.25]

- 2.15 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.16 Pupils are appropriately looked after if they are ill by members of a suitably qualified nursing team. Medical staff are part of the school's pastoral team and the first aid support is suitable across the age groups. Training has been given to all staff, including specialist training for staff working with children in the EYFS. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that there was always somebody available to look after their medical needs. Parents are kept suitably informed if their child is ill.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 20; EYFS 3.28–3.31]

- 2.17 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.18 Pupils at all ages of the school are properly supervised by suitably qualified and trained staff. One member of the senior leadership team oversees all supervision in the school except for the youngest children. The supervision for the EYFS is managed by the head of EYFS. This ensures that the statutory ratios are consistently maintained in the setting.

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

- 2.19 The school meets the standard.
- 2.20 The school maintains a comprehensive admissions register in accordance with requirements. Pupil attendance is monitored at least twice per day for day pupils with additional checks made of boarders throughout the working day. Staff spoken to are aware of the school procedures for a missing child and appropriate guidance is in place for more vulnerable pupils.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 9; EYFS 3.65 and 3.66]

- 2.21 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.22 The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy for all aspects of welfare, health and safety. Welfare risk assessments are undertaken for vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND. All appropriate risk assessments are clear and include approaches to be taken to identify and mitigate risks. Risk assessments are undertaken for visiting speakers. The school identifies ways to mitigate risks for pupils and puts appropriate measures in place to support their needs.

Premises and accommodation – toilets and changing accommodation; medical facilities; maintenance; acoustics; lighting; water supply, and outdoor space and boarding accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–30; NMS 4; EYFS 3.55 and 3.61]

- 2.23 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.24 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to the standard required by the health and safety executive; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; and water provision is adequate. There is suitable outdoor space for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is suitable.
- 2.25 The premises for the youngest children are clean and appropriate for their needs. They are maintained in a suitable condition. Daily maintenance checks and logs are kept as required and any risks are identified and mitigated in a timely manner.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; NMS 14; EYFS 3.75 and 3.76]

- 2.26 The school meets the standard and the requirements.

- 2.27 Parents complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel). 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 clear and comprehensive and are kept appropriately. They indicate any complaints which relate to boarding. An appropriate mechanism exists for boarders to express concerns and they are not penalised for doing so. The school encourages parents to use the procedure if they have any concerns.

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

- 2.28 The school meets the standards.
- 2.29 The proprietor and senior leaders manage safeguarding and welfare arrangements effectively and monitor compliance with the standards and other statutory advice. They implement suitable policies, practices and procedures to enable this. The leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are consistently met and the pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets 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 no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

4. Summary of evidence

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

Inspectors

Miss Sue Duff

Reporting inspector

Mr Chris Manville

Assistant reporting inspector