



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Great Ballard School

January 2023

School's details

School name	Great Ballard School			
DfE number	938/6174			
Address	Great Ballard School Eartham House Eartham Nr Chichester West Sussex PO18 0LR			
Telephone number	01243 814236			
Email address	office@greatballard.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Matthew King			
Chair of proprietors	Mrs Susan Jay			
Proprietor	Mrs Susan Jay			
Age Range	2 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	166			
	EYFS	22	Pre-prep	12
	Prep	52	Seniors	80
Date of inspection	24 January 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Great Ballard School is a co-educational day school. It is located in a rural setting near Chichester. The school includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting. It is proprietorial; directors of the company include members of the proprietor's family. Oversight is supported by an advisory board of governance. The school ceased to offer boarding in 2021 and several areas previously providing boarding accommodation have been refurbished to provide offices and classrooms for the senior school. The school has 29 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Eight pupils have an education, health and care plan. There are 20 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in November 2018, followed by a progress monitoring inspection in May 2019.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase its capacity from 205 to 310 pupils. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	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 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils, including those in the EYFS, are implemented effectively. This includes those relating to the Prevent duty. The school ensures a culture of listening to pupils. Pupils confirm that they have a variety of people to whom they can turn for support. This includes staff that pupils select as ‘champions’ with whom pupils meet regularly in vertical tutor groups in Years 3 to 10. Pupils receive a response when they express concerns, and appropriate action is taken where necessary. This was confirmed during interviews with pupils and staff and by records of safeguarding. Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe, including when online.
- 2.5 All staff, including those in positions of responsibility for safeguarding, are suitably trained in line with locally agreed procedures. Interviews with leaders and staff from all parts of the school, confirm they fully understand their different roles in safeguarding. In particular, staff understand different types of abuse including child-on-child abuse and sexual harassment, and the particular vulnerability of those with SEND. They also understand the need to report concerns expressed at a low level. Staff are ready to identify, report and investigate potential abuse. The safeguarding policy contains both suitable guidance about reporting low-level concerns about adults working in the school and a self-referral process. These are understood by staff and effectively supported. Records show that staff report any safeguarding concerns to the appropriate person in a timely fashion. Senior leaders communicate concerns to relevant outside agencies effectively. They take prompt action where concerns are raised, or incidents occur.
- 2.6 Suitable arrangements to handle allegations against adults working with pupils are implemented effectively. Safeguarding is effectively managed. There is an appropriate staff code of conduct and suitable arrangements for whistleblowing. Interviews with staff confirmed suitable understanding of these and willingness to act appropriately should the need arise. Staff recruitment procedures follow all relevant guidance.
- 2.7 The proprietor ensures that appropriate oversight of safeguarding procedures is maintained. There are sufficiently regular and effective reviews of safeguarding policy and practice. The proprietor is appropriately trained in safeguarding. The safeguarding team represent all parts of the school and are sufficient in number and expertise to support effective safeguarding for pupils within the school community. It is likely that the standard will continue to be met as the pupil numbers increase.

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

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.
- 2.9 The proprietor and senior leaders ensure that a suitable written health and safety policy is implemented effectively. This enables compliance with the relevant health and safety laws in all parts

of the school, including those areas newly converted from boarding facilities to classrooms and offices. The policy and related materials provide staff with suitable guidance on health and safety matters. Appropriate records are kept of relevant health and safety checks. Matters of health and safety are regularly reviewed and reported, with regular monitoring being implemented effectively by the proprietor. Arrangements are appropriate for the proposed increase in the number of pupils.

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

2.10 The school meets the standard.

2.11 The proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, for all parts of the school. Appropriate fire risk assessments (FRAs) have been undertaken by a suitably qualified person. The school implements the required actions from the FRAs suitably and keeps the assessments under review. There are appropriately trained competent persons on site responsible for fire safety. A suitable number of staff are trained effectively to support fire evacuation procedures for the current pupils and for the proposed increase in numbers of pupils. Records show fire evacuations take place regularly and pupils confirmed that they understand the correct procedures. Records show appropriate installation and maintenance of fire detection and firefighting equipment. Arrangements are appropriate for the proposed increase in the number of pupils.

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

2.12 The school meets the standard.

2.13 Discussions with pupils and staff, together with observations around the school, confirm that appropriate numbers of staff are suitably deployed to ensure adequate supervision of pupils. Arrangements are sufficient for the proposed increase in the number of pupils.

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

2.14 The school meets the standard.

2.15 The welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy. The school has an effective understanding of risk assessment. They exist for all relevant aspects of the school premises and activities, where necessary for pupil welfare, and including for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.16 The school meets the standards.

2.17 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.

Premises and accommodation – [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23–29]

2.18 The school meets the standards.

2.19 The school provides suitable toilet and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils. It provides appropriate accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils and for the short-term care of sick pupils. The school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and

welfare of pupils is ensured. This includes for the redeveloped accommodation adapted to meet the proposed increase in pupil numbers. In discussions, staff and pupils confirmed that, in their experience, all matters of maintenance are dealt with satisfactorily and swiftly. The acoustic conditions of the school facilities and internal and external lighting are suitable. Suitable drinking water facilities, clearly marked as such, are provided. The school provides suitable outdoor space for pupils' physical education and for their recreation. It is likely that the standards will continue to be met with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.20 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.

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

- 2.21 The school meets the standard.
- 2.22 The proprietor ensures that senior leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the educational wellbeing of the pupils. Suitable planning for an increase in school capacity has been executed effectively. This makes it likely that the standards will continue to be met with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to increase its total pupil numbers to 310 is granted. The proprietor has made suitable arrangements to ensure that suitable health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment procedures are implemented. Detailed plans to develop the school's accommodation and facilities have been part of a long-term strategic plan to meet the needs of the planned increase in pupil numbers. Some of these and other associated facilities are now in place and others are due to be completed in line with appropriate plans, once the relevant permissions have been obtained. The premises, accommodation and staffing are suitably resourced and maintained to meet the needs of the current pupils and this is likely to remain so for the proposed increase in the number of pupils.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a non-executive director. She visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mrs Vivien Sergeant

Reporting inspector