



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Longridge Towers School

June 2023

School's details

School	Longridge Towers School			
DfE number	929/6001			
Registered charity number	513534			
Address	Longridge Towers School Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 2XQ			
Telephone number	01289 307584			
Email address	enquiries@lts.org.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Jonathan Lee			
Chair of governors	Mr Adrian Bell			
Proprietor	Longridge Towers School			
Age range	3 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	350			
	Day pupils	338	Boarders	12
	EYFS	19	Juniors	92
	Seniors	191	Sixth Form	48
Date of inspection	28 June 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Longridge Towers is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. Originally founded in the 1880s as a convent school for girls, the school adopted its current status in 1983. It is managed by a board of governors. The senior school and boarding accommodation are located in a grade 2 listed Victorian mansion, with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and junior school in adjacent buildings. The school has 77 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils have education, health and care plans. Nineteen pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in February 2020.

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 registered number of pupils from 335 to 399. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 9	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 10	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision); NMS 20	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietor); NMS 19	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23–30 (premises); NMS 4	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (Provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met
NMS 5, boarders' possessions	Met
NMS 6, provision and preparation of food and drinks	Met
NMS 7, boarders' health and wellbeing	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 8]

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.
- 2.4 Safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively in line with the most recent statutory guidance. The school provides appropriate support for pupils' needs, including listening to pupils, and taking appropriate action when concerns are raised. All staff have received suitable training on recent changes to statutory guidance and online safety. New staff complete a comprehensive induction process to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities, including details of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* Part 1 and Annex B; the staff code of conduct; whistleblowing procedures; procedures for children missing education; and the school's behaviour policy. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies have sufficient status and authority to undertake their roles, and have appropriate levels of training, which is in line with local procedures. The DSL and deputies provide regular informal updates to staff and opportunities for discussion on any changes to safeguarding policy and its implementation. Members of the governing body are suitably trained in safeguarding.
- 2.5 Staff have a full understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, including for any pupils with SEND and/or EAL and for boarders. They recognise the importance of 'early help' strategies, know how to report any concerns about pupils, and do so appropriately. They understand the varied types of child-on-child abuse and the seriousness of such behaviours. Arrangements to ensure the welfare of boarders are appropriate and pupils confirm that they feel safe while boarding and always have someone to talk to if they have any concerns.
- 2.6 Staff understand how to report any concerns about senior leaders or other adults working with pupils including those which are at a low level. Appropriate records for safeguarding concerns are maintained, which are regularly monitored by the DSL. These show timely and appropriate liaison with both parents and local agencies. The governing body undertakes an annual safeguarding review with due diligence, demonstrating appropriate rigour in their oversight of arrangements. They require suitable checks on staff recruited to work in the school. They provide a suitable level of support and challenge.
- 2.7 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the increase in pupil numbers from 335 to 399.

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

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.
- 2.9 The school has an appropriate written health and safety policy which covers the areas suggested by the relevant health and safety laws. Senior leaders ensure that this is fully implemented. The school

site is secure and all utility and other checks have been carried out appropriately. Hazards are identified accurately, and their impact is minimised. Testing for legionella is suitably regular as is testing of electrical appliances. Records of checks are methodical. Senior leaders meet regularly to monitor and address all aspects of health and safety for the site necessary to ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are safe. The proprietor oversees these processes effectively. New staff are provided with appropriate health and safety information through the induction process and receive training and regular updates as a reminder of key issues relating to their roles.

2.10 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.11 The school meets the standards.

2.12 A suitable fire safety policy is in place and arrangements for fire evacuation from each building and boarding houses are well understood by students and staff. Staff receive appropriate fire training as part of the induction process and those with responsibility for monitoring of fire arrangements are suitably trained. A full fire risk assessment is completed annually, and action taken in line with the recommendations. Alarm systems including extinguishers are regularly maintained by an external specialist.

2.13 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.14 The school meets the standards.

2.15 The school provides suitable guidance for staff, including for those involved in boarding, which makes clear the expected process for supervision at all times of day and for a range of activities, including off-site visits. Staff rotas are published each term, demonstrate a suitable number of staff on duty during break times and lunchtimes, which are appropriately amended to ensure the safety of pupils. Sufficient numbers of staff or approved adults are present on off-site visits to ensure appropriate supervision is maintained. There are always two members of boarding staff on duty overnight, one on each boarding floor, and all staff undertaking boarding duties complete relevant training with the boarding school's association and participate in regular appraisals of their roles.

2.16 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.17 The school meets the standards.

2.18 A suitable risk assessment policy and comprehensive arrangements are in place to ensure that risks are appropriately identified. Suitable action is taken to reduce risk across the school site and the boarding houses. All staff who are involved in producing risk assessments for activities, trips off-site, or areas of the school receive appropriate training on induction, and this is updated when necessary. The planning process for off-site visits including a detailed process of risk assessment is effectively developed and used consistently. Suitable assessment is made where new risks are identified. Senior staff oversee the risk-assessment process, sign off the assessments and evaluate their effectiveness. The school has carried out a full risk assessment of the impact of the increase in pupil numbers and is well prepared.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 19]

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Staff have completed appropriate training to ensure the recruitment process is secure and senior leaders and governors monitor the systems regularly.
- 2.21 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the increase in pupil numbers.

Premises and accommodation – [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–30; NMS 4]

- 2.22 The school meets the standards.
- 2.23 The school provides suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for the sole use of pupils. These are appropriately segregated. The school has already taken suitable steps to increase the number of toilet and shower facilities onsite. The accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs is appropriate and well managed. Drinking water stations are provided appropriately in all areas of the site. The premises are well maintained to a standard in line with health and safety requirements. Acoustics and lighting are suitable for the range of activities undertaken. The outdoor areas available provide sufficient space for physical education and outdoor recreation. Boarding accommodation is well maintained, provides a comfortable environment and is suitable for the needs of the pupils.
- 2.24 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.25 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; NMS 2]

- 2.26 The school meets the standards.
- 2.27 The school's leadership and management, including for boarding, demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently. Proprietorial review is suitably thorough to ensure that policies are effectively implemented in practice and actively promote the wellbeing of all pupils, including boarders. Planning to increase the number of registered pupils has been systematic and appropriate action has been taken to ensure that all facilities have been upgraded to cater for the larger numbers.
- 2.28 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the increase in pupil numbers.

Boarders' possessions [NMS 5]

- 2.29 The school meets the standards.
- 2.30 Boarders clothing, bedding and towels are laundered regularly and returned to named storage spaces. Personal items are made easily accessible through local shopping trips or on request. All boarders are provided with lockable storage for their personal possessions or can choose to have more valuable items stored in lockable storage in the boarding office. An appropriate search process is outlined in boarding documentation.
- 2.31 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the increase in pupil numbers.

Provision and preparation of food and drinks [NMS 6]

- 2.32 The school meets the standards.
- 2.33 Breakfast, lunch and dinner are provided by the school catering team, prepared in hygienic kitchen areas and served in the well-maintained dining rooms. Boarders confirm that a wide range of snacks and drinks are made available in the boarding houses in the evenings for supper. All boarding staff preparing food are appropriately trained in food and allergen safety. Pupils with specific food requirements or allergies are well catered for.
- 2.34 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the increase in pupil numbers.

Boarders' health and wellbeing [NMS 7]

- 2.35 The school meets the standards.
- 2.36 Appropriate filter systems are in place to ensure that internet usage by boarders is effectively monitored. Electronic devices are handed in to boarding staff overnight. A suitable sign in and out system is in place to ensure that the whereabouts of pupils are always clear to staff. The health and safety officer conducts regular checks of the boarding accommodation to ensure that maintenance matters are rapidly addressed. Boarders' electrical appliances are PAT tested when they are brought into the school.
- 2.37 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the 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 the number of registered pupils from 335 to 399 be approved. The school has effectively considered and planned for the accommodation and safeguarding needs of the additional pupils, including boarders.

4. Summary of evidence

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

Inspectors

Mrs Diane Gardiner

Reporting inspector