



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Material Change Visit

Sidcot School

June 2022

School's details

School	Sidcot School			
DfE number	802/6002			
Registered charity number	296491			
Address	Sidcot School Oakridge Lane Winscombe North Somerset BS25 1PD			
Telephone number	01934 843102			
Email address	info@sidcot.org.uk			
Head	Mr Iain Kilpatrick			
Chair of Governors	Mr Jameson Miller			
Age range	3 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	635			
	Day pupils	480	Boarders	155
	EYFS	20	Juniors	125
	Seniors	361	Sixth Form	129
Inspection dates	29 June 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Sidcot School is a co-educational day and boarding school in North Somerset. It promotes a Quaker ethos. The school includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting. The school is a charitable trust whose trustees have proprietorial responsibility. The school has 169 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom four have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 135 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in November 2021.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an announced material change visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase the school roll from 650 to 700. The visit focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit/inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 3 (teaching) and 4 (assessment)	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 6	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 7	Met
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid)]; NMS 3	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 15	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (Suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietor); NMS 14	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 30 (premises and accommodation); NMS 5	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	Met
NMS 4 (Contact with parents)	Met
NMS 8 (Provision and preparation of food and drinks)	Met
NMS 9 (Boarders' possessions)	Met

2. Inspection findings

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

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 Teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. The school has already ensured that suitable provision is in place for the anticipated increase in pupil roll. A suitable framework operates to assess current pupils' performance against appropriate benchmarks. Current arrangements suggest that the school is likely to meet the standards for teaching if the pupil roll is increased.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 4, 8, 9 and 11]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.3 The school meets the requirements.
- 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.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.5 The school meets the standards.
- 2.6 The implementation of the school's safeguarding policy is effective. Arrangements ensure that pupils, including boarders, are listened to operate effectively. They receive a response to their concerns and action is taken when required, including in the EYFS. Pupils are supported effectively by staff. They are given suitable guidance on staying safe online and the use of technology is effectively safeguarded. Confidential records of pupils at risk or in need of early help are kept appropriately and these demonstrate that close links are maintained with external agencies, including the local area designated officer, when necessary. There is an appropriate staff code of conduct and suitable arrangements for whistleblowing, both of which staff understand.
- 2.7 Staff show effective understanding of their responsibilities and are well trained and regularly updated on developments in safeguarding procedures. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies (DDSLs) have updated their training with the local authority at the correct level. Records show that all staff have been trained appropriately. Staff show appropriate awareness of safeguarding procedures, including matters relating to child-on-child abuse and the particular vulnerability of pupils with SEND to such abuse. The school responds effectively when staff raise any concerns. The safeguarding policy gives sufficient contact details for local agencies. Appropriate arrangements for handling allegations against staff are included in safeguarding procedures. Staff interviewed understood the procedures for reporting such allegations, including low-level concerns.
- 2.8 Suitable arrangements are made to ensure that food preparation, serving and dining areas, including those for boarders, are hygienic, and that all meals are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality choice and variety. Boarders have access to drinking water and the means of hygienically preparing food at reasonable times. The school ensures that adequate laundry provision is made for boarders' clothing and bedding. Boarders are able to obtain personal and stationery items while at school. Reasonable protection is provided for boarders' personal possessions and for any boarders' money or valuables looked after by the school. Suitable arrangements are made to enable boarders to contact their families at reasonable times.

- 2.9 There is a designated safeguarding governor (DSG) who has completed safeguarding training with the local authority at DSL level. The DSG maintains close and regular contact with the DSL and takes an active role in overseeing safeguarding in the school. There is a suitable review of safeguarding procedures and appropriate arrangements for staff recruitment are implemented. Current arrangements for safeguarding and boarders' welfare are likely to continue to be effective when the pupil roll is increased.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 6]

- 2.10 The school meets the standards.
- 2.11 The proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy. Current arrangements suggest that the school is likely to continue to meet the standards when the pupil roll is increased.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 7]

- 2.12 The school meets the standards.
- 2.13 Suitable arrangements are in place to prevent fire. The school has an appropriate fire risk assessment. Regular practice evacuations are carried out as required, including in boarding time, and the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Current arrangements suggest that the school is likely to continue to meet the standards when the pupil roll is increased.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 Appropriate arrangements are made to meet the needs of all pupils, including boarders, who are injured or unwell. There is a sufficient number of appropriately trained staff and first aid kits are available as required. Accommodation for both day pupils and boarders who are unwell is suitably equipped and furnished. Boarders' health and well-being are promoted effectively. Medication is stored and dispensed appropriately both in boarding and in the EYFS. Current arrangements suggest that the school is likely to continue to meet the standards when the pupil roll is increased.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 15]

- 2.16 The school meets the standards.
- 2.17 Suitable arrangements are made to ensure that both day pupils and boarders are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff, including during the evenings, at weekends and overnight. These arrangements suggest that the school is likely to continue to meet the standards when the pupil roll is increased.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 6]

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 The school successfully implements a suitable risk assessment policy and ensures that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified for current pupils, including in boarding. These arrangements suggest that the school is likely to meet the standards when the pupil roll is increased.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 14]

- 2.20 The school meets the standards.
- 2.21 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Governors monitor the process regularly and effectively. Current arrangements suggest that the school is likely to continue to meet the standards when the pupil roll is increased.

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

- 2.22 The school meets the standards.
- 2.23 The proprietor ensures that the school premises and accommodation are maintained to a standard, such that, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured. For current pupils, including boarders, suitable toilet, washing and changing facilities are provided and appropriate accommodation exists for pupils' medical and therapy needs. Acoustics and lighting are appropriate and water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and play. Boarding accommodation, including additional accommodation newly completed, is adequate, comfortable and appropriate for the needs of boarders. Current arrangements suggest that the school is likely to continue to meet the standards when the pupil roll is increased.

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

- 2.24 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 13]

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.
- 2.26 Those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the other standards are consistently met, and the well-being of pupils, including boarders, is actively promoted. Appropriate procedures are implemented effectively which allow governors to monitor compliance with the regulations. Current arrangements suggest that the school is likely to continue to meet the standards when the pupil roll is increased.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change request

3.1 It is recommended that the school's application to increase the pupil roll to 700 be approved.

4. Summary of evidence

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