



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Material Change Visit

Stonyhurst College

November 2021

School's details

School	Stonyhurst College			
DfE number	888/6000			
Registered charity number	1127929			
Address	Stonyhurst College Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 9PZ			
Telephone number	01254 826345			
Email address	admissions@stonyhurst.ac.uk			
Headmaster	Mr John Browne			
Chair of governors	Mr Anthony Chitnis			
Age range	2 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	803			
	Day pupils	378	Boarders	425
	EYFS	17	Juniors	262
	Seniors	302	Sixth Form	222
Date of visit	29 November 2021			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Stonyhurst College, which includes a preparatory school St Mary's Hall, is a co-educational, Roman Catholic, independent boarding and day school for pupils aged 2 to 19. The college became an independent charitable trust governed by trustees in 2009. Pupils attend the preparatory school until the age of 13, and the college thereafter. Boarders live in one of eight boarding houses, one of which is for pupils in the preparatory school. The school has identified 189 pupils as having special educational needs and disabilities. There are three pupils in the school who have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 232 pupils, 186 of whom receive additional support for their English.

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 maximum pupil population from 820 to 860 pupils. The increase relates primarily to an increase in boarding pupil numbers across the year groups from Year 7 upwards, although the school is also projecting a small rise in day pupils across these year groups. 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	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 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 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); 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

2. Inspection findings

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

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 to ensure the welfare of pupils, including boarders and those with SEND. Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding receive training at the appropriate level, including in working with external safeguarding agencies. All other staff, including boarding staff, receive regular training in safeguarding and their responsibility in promoting the welfare of pupils, both those at risk and those in need. This includes all new staff and those recently appointed in anticipation of increased pupil numbers. Such training is in line with the requirements of the local safeguarding partnership (LSP) and includes appropriate training in promoting the pupils' online safety, peer on peer abuse and the prevention of extremism. Discussions with pupils confirmed that the school listens to children, gives a response and acts on their concerns. Boarders in discussions confirmed they are aware of the appropriate helplines, including that of the independent listener with whom they could make contact should they have any worries or concerns. Staff new to the school receive appropriate induction training, including those staff who start work at times other than the start of term. All staff are required to read *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) Part 1 and Annexe B; their understanding of what they have read is checked through periodic briefings and online training sessions, managed by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Training records confirm that all staff have undertaken the necessary training.
- 2.5 The school liaises closely with the LSP and is guided by the advice it receives. Suitable records are kept of child protection concerns and these are stored appropriately. When concerns or allegations have arisen, evidence demonstrates that the school is quick to seek advice from the local authority's designated officer (LADO) and, when appropriate, make a referral. The school is aware of the need to liaise appropriately with parents about safeguarding concerns that arise but also ensures that parental wishes do not override the best interests of the child's welfare.
- 2.6 Staff are clear as to the actions they should take should they have concerns about a child, including those related to peer-on-peer or mental health concerns, or be in receipt of an allegation about a member of staff. Staff know where to find further guidance should they need it and how to use the summary procedure flow charts in the safeguarding guidance. They know that anyone can make a referral to the local authority or, in the case of a child being in immediate danger, to the police. They are confident to do so should the need arise.
- 2.7 Staff have a clear understanding of the school's staff conduct policy, including with regard to the use of mobile phones, guidance on taking images of children involved in school activities, and use of social media. Filters protect pupils from accessing unsuitable websites, and appropriate arrangements are made to monitor the use of the electronic devices used by day and boarding pupils. The school's safeguarding arrangements are overseen appropriately by the governors. The designated governor for safeguarding meets regularly with the DSL to review arrangements and any child protection concerns. In addition, together they carry out an annual review of the school's safeguarding policy

which is then reviewed by the full governing body. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

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

2.8 The school meets the standards.

2.9 The school has a suitably structured health and safety organisation. The school health and safety committee, attended by governors, undertakes regular auditing of policy and procedures, as well as undertaking regular site inspections. All staff have health and safety induction training, with regular updates on a termly basis, supplemented by online training as required and this includes all recently appointed staff. All injuries are recorded appropriately with those requiring medical attention being referred to suitably-qualified first aiders and nursing staff in the health centre. There is clear and appropriate guidance for staff leading trips and excursions. Security arrangements are appropriate, including visitor passes, restricted access to all buildings, including boarding houses, and the appropriate use of CCTV monitoring systems. The school employs full-time security staff and there are security patrols overnight. Access to the site is controlled in so far as is reasonably practical given the nature of the school site, with all road access managed by gate or barrier control. Site tours and discussions with school leaders confirmed that the current arrangements, including those for regular servicing and checking of utilities and safe handling of hazardous substances are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

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

2.10 The school meets the standards.

2.11 The school meets the compliance requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by ensuring that the fire safety policy and all fire risk assessments are reviewed appropriately and implemented. Fire evacuation procedures are regularly rehearsed by staff and pupils at least on a termly basis, including in boarding time. Each school building, including boarding houses has an appointed fire warden and fire marshals, who are suitably trained. All school buildings, including boarding houses, with new and refurbished facilities, are fitted with radio-controlled fire alarm systems and are serviced annually by external fire engineers, ensuring effective fire prevention arrangements. Scrutiny of records of fire risk assessments, fire evacuation procedures and logs of the maintenance of alarms, detectors and servicing arrangements confirm that fire safety is suitably promoted. During site tours and in discussions with the school leaders, there was no indication that an increase in pupil numbers would have an adverse impact on fire safety arrangements.

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

2.12 The school meets the standards.

2.13 The school's first aid policy contains suitable arrangements which are implemented effectively to ensure that its pupils have appropriate access to first aid when it is required through injury or illness. The policy details the arrangements for those with medical needs, the procedures for recording accidents and guidance on when to call an ambulance when required. School staff, including houseparents and security staff are trained appropriately as basic first aiders and a number of staff are sports first aid and paediatric first aid trained. Nursing staff are available at the school's health centre on a 24-hour basis throughout the week during term time and are on call overnight to meet the needs of boarding pupils. There are medical kits available for use at strategic points throughout the school site and medical kits are made available for sports fixtures and trips away from the school premises. Boarding pupils have access to local medical, dental and optician practices by appointment.

The school has a mental health and emotional well-being programme which engages in a range of activities including group discussions, debate and reflection to assist pupils with emotional needs. The school accesses professional mental health services and support when required and pupils have the facility to make direct contact with a counselling service based in the health centre. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

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

2.14 The school meets the standards.

2.15 Appropriate arrangements ensure that pupils of all age groups are suitably supervised and individual needs, such as SEND, taken into account. Duty rotas demonstrate that staff-to-pupil ratios are appropriate for both day and boarding pupils and the recent appointment of extra staff has ensured that there is sufficient staffing in place to accommodate the proposed gradual increase in pupil numbers. Guidance for staff involved in supervision duties is clear and risk assessments are used to ensure that supervision levels are appropriate. At all times pupils are supervised by qualified and experienced staff who know and understand their needs. Where prefects or senior pupils assist with younger pupils, the school ensures that they are directed and supervised in their duties. Satisfactory staffing ensures appropriate supervision of pupils during all break and lunch times and after-school periods.

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

2.16 The school meets the standards.

2.17 An efficient and effective approach is taken to managing risk to ensure the welfare of all pupils in the school. An appropriate risk assessment policy is in place for all school buildings and for organising school outings. All newly occupied buildings, including the health centre and boarding houses which have been subject to refurbishment have suitable risk assessments in place. Staff are suitably trained to implement these. Scrutiny of risk assessment documents shows that appropriate evaluations are undertaken across all age groups, which include consideration towards the needs of boarding pupils and vulnerable pupils. All risk assessments are reviewed and signed off by senior leaders, and a senior member of staff has oversight of school trips both in the UK and overseas. Governance, through the health and safety committee, provides suitable oversight of the risk assessment process and its implementation. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request

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

2.18 The school meets the standards.

2.19 The school ensures that it carries out the appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff prior to a person beginning work in the school. Part-time staff, boarding staff, volunteers and governors are all subject to the appropriate checking procedures, and senior management and governors undertake routine spot checks of the single central register and associated staff files. All staff files contain evidence of checks carried out, and this corresponds to the details held on the single central register. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

Premises and accommodation – toilet, washing and changing facilities [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23; NMS 5]

- 2.20 The school meets the standards.
- 2.21 Tours of the school's accommodation confirmed that adequate toilet, washing and changing facilities are available to all pupils in the school. Separate and appropriately labelled toilet facilities are provided for pupils, and suitable changing and showering facilities are provided for all pupils who take part in physical education. Separate facilities are available for disabled pupils, staff and visitors to the school. All the above facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in the pupil population.

Premises and accommodation – medical facilities [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 24; NMS 5]

- 2.22 The school meets the standards.
- 2.23 The school's health centre, which is adjacent to the main school buildings, is currently located in the Christian Heritage Centre, which prior to the pandemic was used for the purpose of retreats and conferences. It comprises consultations rooms, a surgery, a large common room and waiting area and en-suite rooms which are suitable for the segregated overnight accommodation of both preparatory and senior school pupils. The facility also provides suitable accommodation for those pupils who are self-isolating due to testing positive for COVID -19. The en-suite facilities provide pupils with suitable hand basins, toilets and shower facilities and afford appropriate privacy. Pupils' medical notes and reports are confidentially secured as are any medicines, which are kept in locked cupboards in the consultation rooms. All the above current facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in the pupil population.

Premises and accommodation – maintenance [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25; NMS 5]

- 2.24 The school meets the standards.
- 2.25 Tours of the school site visiting teaching, recreation areas and boarding houses, indicated that maintenance regimes are appropriate, suitably managed and documented. All new and refurbished boarding accommodation and the new health centre are subject to existing and appropriate maintenance regimes and inspection records confirm this. The school uses an online system for reporting maintenance requirements which prioritises responses in terms of the health and safety priority of the item logged. Governors provide suitable oversight and management of maintenance and refurbishment with additional input being provided by members of the health and safety committee. The above provision and facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in the pupil population.

Premises and accommodation – acoustics, lighting and water supply [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 26 –28; NMS 5]

- 2.26 The school meets the standards.
- 2.27 Tours of the school's accommodation confirmed that suitable acoustic and lighting arrangements and water supplies are in place and suitable throughout the school. Adequate sound insulation is provided where required, in high volume areas such as music practice rooms. All recent refurbishment work includes appropriate acoustic cladding, where recommended by external contractors. Internal and external lighting is adequate for the needs of the pupils and staff, including external lighting for security purposes and to allow evening functions to take place across the school site after dark. Suitably tested water supplies are available across all areas of the school with hot and cold water as

required, including ready access to drinking water. The current facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in the pupil population.

Premises and accommodation – outdoor space [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 29; NMS 5]

2.28 The school meets the standards.

2.29 All age groups in the school site have direct access to suitable and appropriate spaces for physical education and recreation. Younger pupils in the preparatory school have their own dedicated play and recreation areas. Pupils in the preparatory and senior schools have their own sports hall and common room areas. Joint use is made of the swimming pool, multi surface games areas and indoor tennis facility and there is a large acreage of grass playing fields, including a cross-country course available to both schools. The size and variety of the current provision means that pupils can be divided up into age-appropriate specific groups as required. The current facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in the pupil population.

Premises and accommodation – boarding accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 30; NMS 5]

2.30 The school meets the standards.

2.31 The boarding houses contain suitable sleeping accommodation for boarders and has facilities which are appropriate for the purpose of organised and private study outside school hours and for social purposes. Accommodation is suitably furnished, appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained. It is of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of boarders to be accommodated, with appropriate protection and separation between genders and age groups. The addition of a new senior girls' boarding facility and refurbishment of the preparatory boys' accommodation means that the current capacity of the boarding houses is sufficient for the needs of the school. There is also spare capacity should an increase in boarding pupil numbers be required as part of the material change

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

2.30 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 and is provided to parents on request.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 13]

2.32 The school meets the standards.

2.33 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met consistently, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Members of the governing board regularly monitor the required standards and ensure that policies and procedures are appropriate and relevant to the school's needs. The inspection visit confirmed that the senior management and governing board have been effectively managing a gradual increase in pupil numbers across all sections of the school, ensuring that they maintain the school's distinctive ethos. Staffing numbers have recently been correspondingly increased. A new house for female pupils and refurbished preparatory school dormitories reflect the strategic planning process to manage the increased pupil numbers. Scrutiny of senior management and governing board minutes confirms that careful consideration has been made of the implications of increasing pupil numbers, and that these will be limited to a maximum pupil population of 860.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change request

- 3.1 Current growth, planned for and monitored appropriately, is likely to see a continued increase in pupil numbers taking the pupil population to over 820 pupils in the present academic year, and then over time to a maximum school capacity of 860 pupils. It is, therefore recommended that approval be given to allow the number of pupils on roll to increase to the requested maximum number of 860 pupils.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and had a telephone conversation with the chair of governors. He visited different areas of the school, in particular the new boarding provision in the preparatory and senior schools and talked with groups of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.