



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Material Change Inspection Report**

**Taunton School**

**September 2022**

## School's details

<b>School</b>	Taunton School			
<b>DfE number</b>	933/6025			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1081420			
<b>Address</b>	Taunton School Staplegrove Road Taunton Somerset TA2 6AD			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01823 703703			
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@tauntonschool.co.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr James Johnson			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Henry Keeling			
<b>Age range</b>	13 to 19			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	740			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	342	<b>Boarders</b>	398
	<b>Taunton School</b>	608	<b>Taunton School International</b>	86
	<b>Taunton School International Middle</b>	46		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	26 September 2022			

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Taunton School is a coeducational day and boarding school. The school comprises Taunton School, Taunton School International, which is located on an adjacent site and Taunton International Middle School. The latter is located a short distance away. A board of governors is responsible for the oversight of the school. The school has 104 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom three have an education, health and care plan. Throughout the school, 298 pupils have 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 day pupil numbers across Taunton School and Taunton School International to 780 pupils. It is not proposed to increase boarding numbers in any part of the school. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) 2022. Boarding was not included in the focus of the visit.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	<b>Met</b>
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	<b>Met</b>
Part 5, paragraphs 23–29 (premises and accommodation)	<b>Met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	<b>Met</b>

## 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 A positive safeguarding culture pervades all aspects of school life. Senior leaders ensure the effective implementation of the school's safeguarding arrangements. Staff speak confidently about this. They stated that they feel school leaders and managers engender an environment in which everyone feels valued. Pupils, in discussions, stated that any worries and concerns are listened to. They speak of the many members of teaching and boarding staff to whom they can talk knowing that they will not be judged. They confirmed that appropriate support action is taken when they raise concerns. There is a suitable culture of mutual support between the pupils themselves. For example, older pupils often work with those lower down the school on areas such as internet safety. Pupils also value the support provided by the school's medical centre. Aspects of safeguarding such as online safety, internet safety and the appropriate use of mobile technology are monitored well by senior leaders. This was confirmed in discussions with pupils who felt confident about topics such as staying safe online and cyber-bullying.
- 2.5 All staff, including those with specific safeguarding responsibility, are trained appropriately. Staff speak with confidence and understanding about the training that they receive and how it ensures that current statutory guidance is followed. This includes recognising the signs of abuse. They understand matters surrounding child-on-child abuse appropriately and also areas such as sexual violence and sexual harassment. Appropriate annual safeguarding training is supported by regular updates, often through staff meetings. Questions and quizzes are used to check understanding and staff discuss a range of safeguarding scenarios. Staff feel confident in the processes of referral should they have any concerns and would be happy to contact local safeguarding partners should the need arise. Suitable training also includes aspects such as the potential misuse of technology by pupils in areas such as the sending of nudes and online bullying. In discussions, staff spoke confidently around any safeguarding matters relating to the staff code of conduct and understood their role as potential whistle-blowers should the need ever arise.
- 2.6 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has a secure oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements and, along with deputies, keeps detailed records of any safeguarding and child protection concerns. The school's safeguarding team works effectively within locally agreed inter-agency procedures. Members of the team maintain appropriate links with the local safeguarding partners and any referrals are made in a timely manner. These includes referrals to the disclosure and barring service (DBS) and teaching regulation agency (TRA), when required. School safeguarding leads and governors also maintain effective oversight of the school's safer recruitment procedures. The designated governor for safeguarding ensures that there are effective links between the DSL and the governing board. The latter carry out an appropriate annual review of the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the role of the DSL. Governors provide sufficient support and appropriate challenge to ensure that school's safeguarding systems and processes are rigorous. This supports the wider safeguarding culture which promotes the wellbeing of pupils. The school has a suitable Prevent

strategy. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.7 The school meets the standard.

2.8 The school has a suitable health and safety policy which is implemented effectively. The school's arrangements are supported by a management structure for health and safety where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. School governors maintain effective oversight of the arrangements. Leaders and managers ensure that a full audit of health and safety is carried out regularly. This provides an action plan which focuses on compliance and resourcing. This is then implemented effectively. Weekly safety 'cluster' meetings capture any accidents or near misses. These are reviewed, investigated and reported, when necessary. All health and safety matters are summarised in a termly report to the governors. Health and safety leaders ensure that suitable records are kept around areas such as hazardous substances, electrical maintenance and legionella testing. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.9 The school meets the standard.

2.10 The school's fire prevention policy is implemented effectively. There is a suitably qualified and experienced person in charge of the school's fire prevention arrangements. Pupils state that fire drills are undertaken regularly, and records confirm this. Regular testing of fire equipment and installations is undertaken. A tour of the school showed that fire exits are clearly signed and are kept free of any obstructions. A fire risk assessment is undertaken, and any deficiencies identified are remedied without delay. All staff receive periodic training in the use of fire extinguishers and in their roles as fire marshals. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.11 The school meets the standard.

2.12 Pupils are properly supervised during the school day and before and after school. Suitable arrangements ensure that pupils know where they can find an adult during break and lunch times. In discussions, pupils stated that they felt they were appropriately supervised at all points during their time in school. Observations during the visit confirm this. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.13 The school meets the standard.

2.14 The school's risk assessment policy sets out clearly a strategic approach to risk management. It is implemented effectively and supported by individual risk assessments for all aspects of school life. These include trips and visits and any occasion when outside providers are used. Through this process any risks are identified, and information included as to how such risks will be minimised. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.
- 2.16 The school's approach to the safer recruitment of staff is secure. All appropriate checks are undertaken before a person begins employment in the school. The school also carries out all the required checks on governors. All required information relating to the safer recruitment process is suitably recorded on the single central register of appointments. The school is likely to continue to meet the standards with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

**Premises and accommodation – toilet and changing accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23]**

- 2.17 The school meets the standard.
- 2.18 There are plentiful toilets, for the sole use of pupils, located at various points around the school sites. The areas also include hand wash basins. Pupils confirmed this in discussions. Accessible toilets are also made available. There are numerous changing areas for activities such as physical education, games and swimming. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.19 The school meets the standard.
- 2.20 The school's medical centre, located in the heart of the school, provides suitable accommodation for sick or injured pupils. There are also separate areas for male and female pupils should they require longer term care. The centre contains male and female toilets, complete with hand basins, and also caters for those who may have accessibility issues. The centre is staffed throughout the day and night by qualified nurses. Pupils feel that the medical centre supports both their physical and mental wellbeing. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.21 The school meets the standard.
- 2.22 The school premises and accommodation are suitably maintained and this was confirmed during tours of both sites. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

**Premises and accommodation – acoustics [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 26]**

- 2.23 The school meets the standard.
- 2.24 The acoustic conditions and sound insulation of each room or other space are suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities for which they are normally used. This was confirmed during tours of both sites. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

**Premises and accommodation – lighting [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 27]**

- 2.25 The school meets the standard.
- 2.26 There is suitable interior lighting in all teaching and learning spaces and in communal areas. Although not seen in use during the visit, there was evidence of exterior lighting systems that would enable safe access to and egress from the school site, during the hours of darkness. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

**Premises and accommodation – water supply [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 28]**

- 2.27 The school meets the standard.
- 2.28 Throughout both sites, suitable drinking water facilities are provided and labelled as such. Toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. The temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.29 The school meets the standard.
- 2.30 The school provides a range of outdoor spaces for physical education, including all weather and grass pitches, and cricket nets. Around the school there are many suitable spaces where pupils can enjoy their free time and relax, if desired. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.31 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]**

- 2.32 The school meets the standard.
- 2.33 The school's leadership and management demonstrate the required skills and knowledge to ensure that all standards are met consistently. They apply these skills and knowledge effectively to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils, including boarders. The school is likely to continue to meet the standard with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

### **3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection**

#### **Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the material change request be granted as the school meets all the standards inspected. The school is likely to continue to meet the standards with the proposed increase in pupil numbers. Teaching spaces in Taunton School International are not large but the pupils are also able to use teaching rooms in Taunton School, which is located alongside. All the school's arrangements support their material change application.



## **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. He visited different areas of the school and talked with a group of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Graham Gorton

Reporting inspector