



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

## **Material Change Inspection Report**

**Worth School**

**November 2022**

## School's details

<b>School</b>	Worth School		
<b>DfE number</b>	938/6208		
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1093914		
<b>Address</b>	Worth School Paddockhurst Road Turners Hill Crawley West Sussex RH10 4SD		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01342 710200		
<b>Email address</b>	information@worth.org		
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Stuart McPherson		
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Jeremy Fletcher		
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18		
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	660		
	<b>Day pupils</b>	373	<b>Boarders</b> 287
	<b>Seniors</b>	403	<b>Sixth Form</b> 257
<b>Date of inspection</b>	1 November 2022		

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

1.1 Worth School is an independent co-educational Roman Catholic boarding and day school near Crawley, West Sussex. It is located adjacent to the community of Benedictine monks at Worth Abbey. It is a charitable trust independent of the monastic community, administered by governors, who are also trustees. Boarding provision is available from the age of 13 years. There are six boarding houses, situated on the main school site. There are 207 pupils at the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); one pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 192 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a progress monitoring inspection in February 2022.

### Purpose of the inspection

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 numbers from 640 to 700. 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	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 9	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire); NMS 10	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 20	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	<b>Met</b>
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 19	<b>Met</b>
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 30 (premises and accommodation); NMS 4	<b>Met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (quality of leadership and management); NMS 2	<b>Met</b>

## 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 Implementation of all aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support for the needs of pupils, including boarders. Safeguarding procedures are implemented to safeguard children at risk and those in need. Staff show effective understanding of their responsibilities, including with regard to child-on-child abuse and any such abuse linked to respect for those with protected characteristics. Staff show appropriate awareness of the school's staff prudence code, whistleblowing policy and safeguarding procedures. They have a suitable knowledge of the thresholds for reporting issues. Staff are aware of who to go to if they have a concern or receive a disclosure. They understand that they can make a direct referral to children's services if necessary. They take appropriate action when necessary.
- 2.5 The safeguarding policy includes suitable definitions of abuse and has been reviewed effectively in line with the latest statutory guidance. It provides appropriate guidance regarding possible abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. Discussion with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and senior deputy DSL for the school confirmed that pupils receive help to address risks and prevent issues escalating. The DSL acts on and refers the early signs of risk or need, monitors any potential for radicalisation, and ensures the school listens to the views of individual pupils as required by *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. This is confirmed in written evidence from safeguarding records. In discussion, pupils explained that the school's promotion of the *value of silence* underpins a culture in which listening is prevalent. Pupils confirmed that if they raise concerns they receive a response and action is taken where necessary. All behavioural issues and allegations of bullying are treated as potential safeguarding concerns. Effective communication is maintained with parents. Pupils receive guidance on staying safe and show understanding of what they have been taught, including in relation to e-safety. The physical and mental health of all pupils involved in any incident are given a high priority, and the school provides effective counselling.
- 2.6 The safeguarding policy gives contact details for required local safeguarding partners. Suitable recruitment procedures for staff are outlined within the safeguarding policy and detailed in a separate recruitment policy. The training for those with specific safeguarding responsibilities is in line with local requirements and statutory advice and is up to date. Training in safeguarding for teaching and non-teaching staff is of sufficient quality and frequency.
- 2.7 Suitable arrangements for handling allegations against staff, senior leaders or the governors, and potential misconduct, are included in safeguarding procedures. They include seeking immediate advice from the local authority designated safeguarding officer (LADO). Records show that procedures are followed effectively, and the school follows up actions promptly. The school understands its role in reporting any person to relevant regulatory bodies if circumstances require it.

- 2.8 Governors are appropriately trained in safeguarding. Governors initiate full reviews by external professionals following any incident with implications for safeguarding, and act on any recommendations made. A governor with appropriate expertise maintains a close working contact with the DSL and his deputy and annually conducts a review of the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements on behalf of the governors.

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

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 The school's health and safety policy is effectively implemented, including in boarding. It includes clear lines of accountability and arrangements to delegate responsibility and provides staff with adequate guidance on health and safety matters. Procedures and the approach to health and safety indicate that the school recognises its duty to take care of the pupils. Arrangements for routine testing of all areas of risk are well planned, rigorously undertaken and accurately recorded. The security of the site is given a high priority.

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

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 An appropriate fire safety policy is in place and implemented effectively. An up-to-date fire risk assessment has been made of the new building. Fire evacuation procedures are practised at least termly, including in boarding time for boarders, and suitable records are kept of these. Staff have received suitable fire safety training. Fire safety equipment is maintained appropriately, and clear fire signage is in place, including in the newly refurbished buildings.

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

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 Pupils are properly supervised by qualified and trained staff. Boarders are at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who is suitably qualified and experienced. Staff know the whereabouts of boarders in their charge at all times or know how to find their whereabouts.

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

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.
- 2.16 The school has a coherent and strategic approach to the identification, evaluation and mitigation of risk in all aspects of school life. The risk assessment policy clearly describes appropriate lines of responsibility and the approaches to be taken to identify and reduce risk. There is an effective culture of assessing risk to pupils in any decision taken, in particular regarding pupils about whom behavioural, relationship or safeguarding concerns have been identified. There are appropriate assessments of risk for in-school activities and for school visits. Appropriate assessments are also made for the needs of individual pupils both while in school and in the surrounding area. In all these areas, appropriate action is taken to mitigate risks identified.

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

- 2.17 The school meets the standards.
- 2.18 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, and proprietors, volunteers and contractors. This includes checks against the barred list where relevant, medical checks and checks for prohibitions from teaching, including for peripatetic and other visiting staff. Suitable checks are made for those staff who care for, train, supervise, or are in charge of boarders. There are clear protocols for the checking of those who work and/or live in the adjacent Abbey buildings and land. All checks are completed before staff begin work. All required checks are recorded appropriately in the single central record of appointments (SCR).

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

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 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 are ensured. This includes boarding accommodation. The provision of a new building has allowed the enhancement of adjacent teaching and study accommodation. Separate toilet and washing facilities for male and female pupils are provided in school for their sole use. Suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for day pupils and boarders. Appropriate accommodation is provided to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils. The acoustic conditions and sound insulation of each room or other space are suitable. The lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, and external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises. Suitable drinking water facilities are provided, toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water, and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. In the new building, cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked. There is no contrary evidence that the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users. The school site provides ample space for pupils' physical education and play.

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

- 2.21 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]**

- 2.22 The school meets the standards.
- 2.23 Senior leaders and governors demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are consistently met, and the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted. Governors monitor compliance with regulations appropriately. Leadership at all levels has planned effectively for the proposed increase in numbers, including for any changes in the ratios of in the day/boarding and male/female pupils.

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

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to increase the numbers of pupils from 640 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 the chair of governors. He visited different areas of the school, including the new building, and talked with groups of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Stephen Cole

Reporting inspector