



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Report for a Material Change Visit**

**Sherfield School**

**October 2021**

## School's details

<b>School</b>	Sherfield School			
<b>DfE number</b>	850/6084			
<b>Early Years registration number</b>	EY293642			
<b>Address</b>	Sherfield School Reading Road Sherfield-on-Loddon Hook Hampshire RG27 0HU			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256 884800			
<b>Email address</b>	hmpa@sherfieldschool.co.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Nicholas Brain			
<b>Proprietor</b>	GEMS Education			
<b>Age range</b>	0 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	530			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	478	<b>Boarders</b>	52
	<b>EYFS</b>	93	<b>Juniors</b>	168
	<b>Seniors</b>	220	<b>Sixth Form</b>	49
<b>Date of visit</b>	11 October 2021			

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Sherfield School is a co-educational day and boarding school situated in the village of Sherfield-on-Loddon, to the north east of Basingstoke. The school was founded as a boarding school for female pupils in 1947, with the current school opening in 2004. The school is owned by Global Educational Management and governed by the UK section Bellevue Education. The school has four sections: a nursery for children from three months to three years of age which includes the registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting; junior prep for pupils in Reception to Year 4; senior prep which comprises Years 5 to 8; and the senior school for those in Years 9 to 13. Boarding is available for pupils from Year 4 onwards. The school has identified 63 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health care plan. English is an additional language for 52 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in January 2020.

### 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 number of pupils from 500 to 630 pupils. The visit focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs). The visit was focussed in the senior school.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 15 (admission and attendance registers)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	<b>Met</b>
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	<b>Met</b>

Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 30 (premises and accommodation)	<b>Met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 7, paragraph 33 (manner in which complaints are to be handled)	<b>Met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	<b>Met</b>

## 2. Inspection findings

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]**

- 2.1 The school meets the standard.
- 2.2 The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, including assembly time, tutor time as well as discrete lessons, ensures that all pupils receive suitable guidance to support their personal development. There is a strong focus on British values throughout the school, encouraging respect, tolerance and empathy towards the needs of others, including those with protected characteristics. This was evident in positive interactions observed between pupils and between staff and pupils. During discussion, pupils articulated the view that rules are necessary to ensure equality and fairness within society. Visitors to the school and a range of themed opportunities across the diverse school community to explore sustainability and current affairs engender pupils' effective understanding of different cultures and the needs of a diverse world. Pupils develop age-appropriate democratic knowledge through classroom debates and school council membership elections.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 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 Arrangements are implemented effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including children in the EYFS and boarders, by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance. The safeguarding policy is implemented effectively to ensure a culture of listening to pupils, that pupils receive a response when they raise concerns and that action is taken when needed. Pupils confirm that they have a variety of people to turn to for support. This was confirmed during interviews with pupils and staff and by scrutiny of safeguarding records. Pupils are given suitable guidance on staying safe online and the school has sufficient filtering and monitoring procedures in place to ensure appropriate use.
- 2.7 The school liaises with local agencies effectively and takes prompt action where concerns are raised. All staff, including those in positions of responsibility, are suitably trained in line with locally agreed procedures and safeguarding is effectively managed. Suitable arrangements exist to handle allegations against adults working with pupils. Staff understand the different types of peer-on-peer abuse, including in relation to pupils with SEND. Pupils' mental health needs are appropriately attended to. There is an appropriate staff code of conduct and suitable arrangements for whistleblowing. Interviews with staff confirmed suitable understanding of these and willingness to act appropriately should the need arise. Records show that the staff recruitment policy is fully implemented to ensure that all adults are checked in line with statutory requirements.
- 2.8 The school has ensured suitable arrangements are in place during the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain all safeguarding requirements. The proprietor ensures suitable oversight of safeguarding arrangements through regular review of procedures and policies at advisory governor meetings. There are sufficient numbers of trained deputy safeguarding leads to cater for the proposed increase in the number of pupils.

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9]**

- 2.9 The school meets the standard.
- 2.10 A suitable written behaviour policy is implemented effectively and clearly sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils' misbehaviour. An appropriate record is maintained of sanctions for serious misbehaviour. The school's electronic system enable staff to record all behaviour issues. Inspection scrutiny of these records shows there is a clear oversight of all incidents of poor behaviour and information from the records informs pupil behaviour management plans, resulting in appropriate actions such as interventions. The records are regularly monitored by senior management to identify patterns. Pupils during discussion commented that they are fully aware of the school rules and sanctions system. They perceive the system to be fairly administered and inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils commented that relationships with their peers are generally harmonious; that there is only the occasional mishap. They report that staff are prompt to intervene and help sort out differences if required.

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10]**

- 2.11 The school meets the standard.
- 2.12 The school gives suitable guidance to pupils about bullying and appropriate training to staff. Pupils understand the different types of bullying, know when and how to seek help, and that they should report any bullying they observe. When pupils report concerns, these are attended to promptly, with support given to both the victim and the perpetrator. These measures include appropriate action where any elements of bullying could be considered name calling or physical assault and care for any pupils whose mental health may be affected by bullying. Staff are aware of the seriousness of bullying and the need to refer to the designated safeguarding lead any incidents they consider serious. The school logs all bullying incidents in a central record kept by the school senior leaders. The central log is reviewed regularly to identify any trends, with appropriate action taken to address these.

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

- 2.13 The school meets the standard.
- 2.14 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. Refurbished accommodation and classrooms, completed by the school in previous years to cater for the increase in numbers are appropriately and effectively included in health and safety protocols by the school. The proprietor arranges effective oversight of arrangements through the health and safety committee. The current arrangements are likely to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.15 The school meets the standard.
- 2.16 The proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Records demonstrate that appropriate fire drills take place, confirmed in interviews with pupils and staff. Records show that all refurbished accommodation have been added to the school fire alarm systems, by appropriately qualified personnel and it contain suitable fire-fighting equipment. The school has appropriate measures in place for fire risk assessment for its current buildings and records indicate appropriate regular maintenance of related equipment. The proposed number of pupils boarding at any one time remains in line with current capacity. The current arrangements are likely to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.17 The school meets the standard.
- 2.18 The proprietor ensures that there is a written first aid policy including appropriate policies for the care of pupils who are unwell. This is effectively implemented such that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner to pupils, and ensures that the physical and mental health, and emotional well-being of pupils is promoted. Suitable accommodation is provided to cater for the needs of pupils who are sick or injured, which is adequately staffed by appropriately qualified personnel. The current arrangements are likely to meet the need of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils, admission and attendance registers [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14 and 15]**

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 The proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff. Records show that the school has increased the numbers of staff on duty at any one time during the school day. This both ensures adequate provision of pupils during COVID-19 and will also ensure adequate supervision with increased numbers of pupils. The school has sufficient numbers of suitably trained staff to whom pupils can talk to should they require assistance. Admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required.

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

- 2.21 The school meets the standard.
- 2.22 The school has a suitable risk assessment policy and ensures appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified for current pupils. The school has completed effective risk assessment to identify how the proposed increase in numbers will affect the use of school facilities. It has suitable procedures in place to mitigate any risk. These include increased capacity in refurbished buildings, and effectively managing existing communal spaces, such as the dining room and hall, to cater suitably for the proposed increase in numbers.

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

- 2.23 The school meets the standards.
- 2.24 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors and a register is kept as required.

**Premises and accommodation – [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23 – 30]**

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.
- 2.26 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities are provided where required, and appropriate accommodation exists for pupils' medical and therapy needs. These are sufficient to meet the need of current pupils and the proposed increase in numbers. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; and water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. The school has refurbished sufficiently to accommodate the proposed increase in numbers. Existing specialist teaching facilities meet the needs of the increased numbers of pupils. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of boarders and safeguards their welfare.

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

- 2.27 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]**

- 2.28 The school meets the standard.
- 2.29 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the educational well-being of the pupils. Arrangements to monitor boarding are effective.



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

- 3.1 It is recommended that the request to increase in school numbers from 500 to 630 pupils is granted.
- 3.2 Welfare, health and safety practices meet the standards. Refurbishments to science facilities and the sixth-form centre indicate that the standards continue to be met with the increase in numbers which has already started to take place. Other existing accommodation is suitable for the proposed increase in numbers. The school does not aim to increase the overall numbers of pupils boarding at any one time but manage the existing day pupils who board occasionally so that the overall numbers stay within existing capacity. The school meets the standards for recruitment of staff and has either already employed new staff or has sufficient capacity to increase pupil numbers in classes, without impacting on existing staff. The school has produced suitable plans to show how the proposed increase in numbers will be effectively managed, so that the standards continue to be met.

## **4. Summary of evidence**

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