



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

Bablake School

September 2022

School's details

School name	Bablake School		
DfE number	331/6017		
Registered charity number	528961		
Address	Bablake School Coundon Road Bablake Coventry West Midlands CV1 4AU		
Telephone number	02476 271200		
Email address	headsPA.bablake@bkhs.org.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Andrew Wright		
Chair of governors	Mr Ian Dunn		
Age range	11 to 18		
Number of pupils on roll	724		
	Seniors	525	Sixth Form 199
Date of inspection	15 September 2022		

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Bablake School is an independent co-educational day school located near the centre of Coventry. It was founded in 1344 and became part of the Coventry School Foundation in 1975. The foundation's trustees oversee the running of the school and other schools in Coventry, including King Henry VIII School. The school shares a site with the separately registered Bablake Junior School.
- 1.2 The school has 138 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), two of whom have an education, health and care plan. Fifty pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The principal and the current headmaster took up their posts in September 2022. A new chair of governors was appointed in October 2021.
- 1.3 The previous inspection was an additional inspection in December 2021.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.4 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the additional inspection on 14 and 15 December 2021. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs).

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Not met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Not met
Part 6, paragraph 32 (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Not met

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 does not meet the standard.
- 2.4 The school's arrangements for safeguarding have improved in several areas identified during the previous inspection. Since the previous inspection, the school has liaised with parents and external agencies as required in relation to pupil concerns, including those relating to child-on-child sexual harassment. The school has taken effective action to ensure that safeguarding information is kept confidential and stored securely. However, procedures to check the suitability of staff do not yet meet requirements. Not all staff appointed since the previous inspection have been checked comprehensively before beginning work in the school. Not all had been checked against the list of those prohibited from teaching and/or from managing a school, where relevant, prior to the inspection. References have not been verified for all staff appointed since the previous inspection. Staff files do not always contain the required evidence to support the dates recorded on the single central register of appointments (SCR), particularly in relation to the relevant member of staff's identity and right to work in the UK.
- 2.5 A suitable policy is in place for the management of low-level concerns about adults working in the school. However, this is not sufficiently well understood by staff to enable its effective implementation in practice.
- 2.6 The safeguarding policy outlines appropriate systems for the management of child-on-child abuse and instances of sexual harassment and sexual violence, but these are not implemented effectively. Pupils told inspectors that they regularly choose not to report concerns in these areas because they do not believe that the actions taken by the school are sufficient to prevent further occurrences. Inspection evidence shows that staff do not implement the school's policy to challenge verbal sexual harassment consistently or effectively in lessons and around the school. The frequency of reports recorded as made to senior leaders and staff of instances of sexual harassment in school and online is not consistent with the frequency identified to inspectors by female pupils. Their comments showed sexual harassment to be much more common than records suggest.
- 2.7 Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure trusted adults are available to listen to pupil concerns. The school ensures that staff are aware of the particular vulnerabilities of LGBTQ+ pupils and of those with SEND, and appropriate action is taken in response to their concerns. Arrangements to handle allegations about adults working in the school are suitable; any such instances are referred to the appropriate external agencies. Effective procedures have been implemented to manage potential safeguarding risks relating to individuals who have access to children. Staff, including school leaders, are suitably trained and informed as to the needs of individual pupils.
- 2.8 Governors have taken effective steps to improve the effectiveness and suitability of their oversight of safeguarding. Review of governance structures and practice has resulted in a more thorough and robust system of reporting to governors. Their review of safeguarding has been developed. Governors receive appropriate training in safeguarding. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding meets regularly with school leaders to receive reports about the school's safeguarding procedures. However,

the improved arrangements have not yet ensured that all aspects of the school policies and procedures, including those for staff recruitment, are implemented effectively.

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

- 2.9 The school meets the standard.
- 2.10 Senior leaders have drawn up and implemented an effective anti-bullying strategy. Interviews with pupils and staff and scrutiny of school records confirm that the school offers appropriate support to pupils, both those who are bullied and perpetrators. This includes pupils who may be more vulnerable to bullying because of their particular learning needs or sexuality.

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

- 2.11 The school meets the standard.
- 2.12 The school has an appropriate policy to ensure the timely and competent administration of first aid. Interviews with pupils and staff and scrutiny of school records confirms that this is implemented effectively. This includes occasions when pupils sustain more serious injuries.

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

- 2.13 The school meets the standard.
- 2.14 Senior leaders ensure that pupils are properly supervised throughout the school day. Procedures including the appropriate deployment of school staff on all school transport.

Other requirements – Accessibility plan

- 2.15 The school meets the standard.
- 2.16 Evidence from pupil and staff interviews and scrutiny of school records indicates that the school fulfils its duties under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. In particular, it ensures that all reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with SEND when taking external examinations.

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

- 2.17 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.18 An SCR is now kept for the school but it does not consistently and accurately record the dates on which checks were undertaken.
- 2.19 Checks for the large majority of staff appointed since the previous inspection have been carried out in a timely manner. However, for a small number of staff, checks of identity, the right to work in the UK and overseas checks, where relevant, have not been carried out before appointment.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32]

- 2.20 The required range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. The school's safeguarding policy and a copy of the most recent inspection report are published on its website.

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

2.21 The school does not meet the standard.

2.22 Since the previous inspection, the governing body has implemented the recommendations of a review of governance. This has resulted in improved systems for the reporting of safeguarding by the school. These include suitable reporting formats and appropriately regular visits to the school by the governor with responsibility for safeguarding. Governors have ensured suitable training for staff in relation to child protection. However, these steps have not ensured that the independent school standards are met consistently, in particular with regard to areas of safeguarding, including sexual harassment and staff recruitment. The wellbeing of pupils is not yet effectively promoted.

3. Regulatory action points

3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraph 7

- The school must ensure that all staff respond effectively when they encounter instances of child-on-child abuse, including verbal or online sexual harassment [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].
- The school must ensure that staff understand and implement fully its policy for the reporting of staff concerns that do not meet the threshold for reporting to the LADO [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].
- The school must ensure that it obtains references for staff and checks them, where relevant, against the lists of those prohibited from teaching and/or from managing a school, before they start work at the school [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].
- The school must ensure that the evidence required to confirm a person's identity and their right to work in the UK is retained in staff personnel files [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].
- Governors must provide oversight of safeguarding which is sufficiently effective to ensure that all aspects of the relevant policies and procedures, including those for staff recruitment, are implemented effectively [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

ISSR Part 4, Suitability of staff, paragraph 18

- The school must ensure that it carries out all required checks, including those of identity, right to work in the UK, and overseas checks where relevant, to ascertain the suitability of staff to work with children before they start work at the school [paragraph 18(3)].

ISSR Part 4, Suitability of staff, paragraph 21

- The school must ensure that the single central register records dates of all checks accurately, in particular those for checks of identity, right to work in the UK and, where relevant, overseas checks [paragraph 21(3)(a)(i), (vii) and (viii)].

ISSR Part 8, Leadership and management, paragraph 34

- The proprietor must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and that they actively promote the wellbeing of pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

4. Summary of evidence

4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a group of governors. They visited different areas of the school, observed lessons and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mrs Karen Williams

Reporting inspector

Mr Bill Burn

Assistant reporting inspector