



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

Cokethorpe School

May 2023

School's details

School name	Cokethorpe School			
DfE number	931/6046			
Registered charity number	309650			
Address	Cokethorpe School Witney Oxfordshire OX29 7PU			
Telephone number	01993 703921			
Email address	admin@cokethorpe.org			
Headmaster	Mr Damian Ettinger			
Chair of governors	Mr John Bennett			
Proprietor	Cokethorpe Educational Trust Ltd			
Age Range	4 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	622			
	EYFS	3	Juniors	108
	Seniors	386	Sixth Form	125
Date of inspection	23 May 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Cokethorpe School is a co-educational independent day school situated in west Oxfordshire. It is overseen by a board of governors. The school consists of a prep school, which includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting; a senior school; and a sixth form. All are located on the same site. The school has identified 51 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 39 receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 13 pupils, 6 of whom receive additional support. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in November 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 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 focused and educational quality inspection in November 2022. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	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 meets the standard.
- 2.4 Implementation of all aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support to ensure the welfare of pupils.
- 2.5 Recruitment procedures are in line with statutory advice and are followed with suitable rigour. In particular, suitable references are now obtained for all staff, and section 128 checks carried out for all in management positions, before staff commence working at the school. Suitable recruitment procedures for staff are outlined within the safeguarding policy and detailed in a separate recruitment policy. Those responsible for recruitment decisions have received appropriate training. Safeguarding procedures are implemented to safeguard children at risk and those in particular need. Staff show effective understanding of their responsibilities, including with regard to child-on-child abuse and any such abuse linked to those with protected characteristics. Staff show appropriate awareness of the staff code of conduct, whistleblowing policy and safeguarding procedures and are confident to use them. They have a suitable knowledge of the thresholds for reporting issues. Staff are appropriately informed about issues that put pupils at risk. Staff understand that they can make a direct referral to children's services if necessary. They take appropriate action when needed.
- 2.6 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, including linking such abuse to bullying. Governors and school leaders review the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements regularly, and annually receive an external audit from a local safeguarding partner. Discussions with staff, pupils and an inspection of safeguarding records confirm that pupils receive suitable help to address risks. The DSLs act on and refer to appropriate agencies the early signs of risk or need and monitor any potential for radicalisation. They ensure the school listens to the views of individual pupils as required by *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. This, too, is confirmed in written evidence from safeguarding records. All behavioural issues and allegations of bullying are treated as potential safeguarding concerns and addressed effectively. Pupils receive guidance on staying safe and show understanding of what they have been taught, including in relation to e-safety. Monitoring and filtering of technology is effective. The physical and mental health of all pupils are given a suitably high priority.
- 2.7 The safeguarding policy gives contact details for required local safeguarding partners. 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. Governors are trained appropriately in safeguarding, including in safer recruitment of staff.
- 2.8 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 such 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.

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

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 All the required checks on staff and governors are now carried out and completed before they take up their posts, including checks of medical fitness. Contractors send the school up-to-date information on checks they have undertaken on their employees, and the school makes appropriate further checks on arrival.
- 2.11 The school maintains correctly an accurate single central register of appointments which includes the dates on which all checks have been completed.

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

- 2.12 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]

- 2.13 The school meets the standard.
- 2.14 Appropriate procedures are implemented which allow the senior leaders and the proprietor to manage safeguarding and welfare arrangements and monitor compliance with standards and other statutory advice, including those concerned with safeguarding and staff recruitment. In this way the leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted. The action plan required following the previous inspection has been implemented fully and successfully.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

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 groups of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mr Stephen Cole

Reporting inspector