



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

Dean Close School

March 2021

School's details

School	Dean Close School			
DfE number	916/6035			
Registered charity number	1086829			
Address	Dean Close School Shelburne Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL516HE			
Telephone number	01242 258000			
Email address	office@deanclose.org.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Bradley Salisbury			
Chair of governors	Mrs Kathryn Carden			
Age range	12 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	487			
	Day pupils	228	Boarders	259
	Seniors	293	Sixth Form	194
Date of visit	24 March 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Dean Close School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. The school is located in Cheltenham and is part of the Dean Close Foundation. The warden oversees the foundation and reports to a board of trustees who are responsible for governance and oversight. Boarders are accommodated in six boarding houses, three for male pupils and three for female pupils. The school has 74 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of whom has an education, health and care plan. There are 79 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was an additional inspection visit in April 2021.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring visit 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 visit in April 2021. The visit focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	Met
NMS 6 (safety of boarders)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11]

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 Safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively in line with current statutory guidance, including in boarding. The school provides appropriate support for pupils' needs, including listening to children, giving a suitable response and taking appropriate action when concerns are raised. In interviews pupils confirmed that their views and concerns are heard and acted upon. All staff have received suitable training on recent changes to statutory guidance and online safety. New staff complete a comprehensive induction process to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities, including details of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) Part 1 and Annex B, the staff code of conduct, whistleblowing procedures, procedures for children missing education and the school's behaviour policy. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy have sufficient status and authority to undertake their roles, and have appropriate levels of training, which is in line with local procedures. The DSL provides regular informal updates to staff and opportunities for discussion on any changes to safeguarding policy and its implementation. Pupils understand how to stay safe online and there is suitable monitoring of technology and its use.
- 2.5 Discussions with staff confirm that they have a full understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They recognise the importance of 'early help' strategies, know how to report any concerns about pupils or other staff, and do so appropriately, including low-level concerns. Staff understand the varied types of pupil-on-pupil abuse, including sexual harassment, the seriousness of such behaviours and the vulnerability of certain groups to these, including pupils with SEND. They understand how to report any concerns about senior leaders. Appropriate records for safeguarding concerns are maintained, and these are regularly monitored by the DSL. These show timely and appropriate liaison with both parents and local agencies. The trustees provide the safeguarding team with regular support and appropriate challenge and undertake an annual safeguarding review with due diligence, good knowledge of the guidance and demonstrate rigour in their oversight of arrangements.

Safety of boarders [NMS 6]

- 2.6 The school meets the standard.
- 2.7 The school has ensured compliance with all aspects of relevant health and safety laws by drawing up and effective implementation of its health and safety policy and risk assessment policy in all respects in boarding. This includes appropriate arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils who need to quarantine or isolate whilst in boarding accommodation. The accommodation allocated to those pupils, is well-maintained to ensure their health, safety and welfare.
- 2.8 The school has ensured that, since the previous inspection, it has implemented effectively its COVID-19 risk assessment policy for boarders returning from 'red list' countries in all regards. This includes

making suitable arrangements for any interim stop between the point of entry and the school as laid out in relevant guidance from the DfE, and ensuring these arrangements are adhered to.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 6]

2.9 The school meets the standards.

2.10 A suitable risk assessment policy and comprehensive arrangements are in place to ensure that risks are appropriately identified, and action is taken to mitigate them and to reduce risk across the school site. Since the previous inspection a full review of the risk assessment process across the whole foundation has been undertaken. All risk assessments have been refreshed and staff and trustees now have easy access to the full range to add comment or suggest improvement where appropriate. All staff who are involved in producing risk assessments for activities, trips off site, or areas of the school, including boarding, receive appropriate training on induction, and this is updated when necessary. The planning process for off-site visits includes a detailed process of risk assessment. This is well developed and used consistently. Suitable welfare risk assessment is made for pupils or where new risks are identified. The school has appropriate risk-assessment measures for COVID-19, and all of these now operate effectively. Senior staff oversee the risk-assessment process, sign off the assessments and evaluate their effectiveness.

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

2.11 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]

2.12 The school meets standards.

2.13 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and all areas of non-compliance identified at the time of the previous inspection visit have been rectified.

2.14 Proprietorial oversight since the previous inspection has included a full review of all policies and procedures to ensure that they meet all regulatory requirements in full and that they are effectively implemented in practice to actively promote the well-being of all pupils. This review has included scrutiny of provision for the medical and well-being needs of day pupils and boarders resulting in the introduction of a well-being hub which provides a multi-disciplinary approach to manage the physical and emotional needs of all pupils.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this visit, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the deputy head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the designated safeguarding trustee. She visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.