



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

Epsom College

November 2022

School's details

School	Epsom College			
DfE number	936/6030			
Registered charity number	312046			
Address	Epsom College College Road Epsom Surrey KT17 4JQ			
Telephone number	01372 821000			
Email address	info@epsomcollege.org.uk			
Head	Mrs Emma Pattison			
Chair of governors	Dr Alastair Wells			
Age range	11 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1098			
	Day pupils	787	Boarders	311
	Seniors	716	Sixth Form	382
Date of inspection	15 November 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Epsom College is an independent co-educational day and boarding school situated in Epsom. It is a Christian foundation, operating as a charitable company and limited by guarantee. It is governed by a board of trustees who are appointed by the Council of the Royal Medical Foundation. The school comprises 13 single-sex houses: seven for day pupils; five for boarders; and one which accommodates both day and boarding female pupils. The lower school is situated in its own separate building and accommodates pupils in Years 7 and 8. The school has 204 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom two have an education, health and care plan. There are 106 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The current head took up her position in September 2022. The previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection which took place in December 2021.

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 on 11 August 2022 following the regulatory compliance inspection on 8 to 10 December 2021. 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.
- 1.3 Additionally, this inspection serves as a material change inspection to assess the school's proposal to increase the maximum number of pupils from 1,050 to 1,150.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 9 (behaviour) and 10 (bullying); NMS 15 and 16	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (quality of leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

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 The school acts in the best interests of the child. Since the previous inspection, the school has extended the mechanisms that enable pupils to voice any concerns they might have, including anonymously. Scrutiny of safeguarding records confirms that leaders and staff take effective action to respond to any concerns raised. The school acts in line with locally agreed inter-agency procedures, including with regard to any concerns relating to child-on-child abuse or allegations against staff.
- 2.5 The school has also entirely overhauled and streamlined the way that concerns about pupils' welfare are recorded. The electronic system for recording child protection incidents now categorises the nature of any concerns effectively. As a result, safeguarding records clearly indicate all instances of bullying, sexual harassment, sexual violence and child-on-child abuse, particularly those linked to the protected characteristics. Because of this, those with particular safeguarding responsibilities now receive the information about pupils which is necessary for the effective implementation of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. The safeguarding governor and the DSL are now aware of all such cases and all relevant cases are now managed under the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. In addition, there is now in place effective overview and monitoring by leaders and governors of all safeguarding incidents, particularly those relating to inappropriate or sexualised behaviour, to ensure timely and appropriate action is taken in response.
- 2.6 Staff, including the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and her deputies, are appropriately trained. Since the previous inspection, leaders have monitored the effectiveness of safeguarding training appropriately. They ensure that staff show sufficient clarity in their understanding of current safeguarding requirements, including the reporting of low-level concerns. This was confirmed in discussions, and safeguarding records demonstrate that staff report concerns appropriately.
- 2.7 The school responds appropriately and swiftly to allegations relating to child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment or violence, or abuse of those with protected characteristics. This includes by providing suitable support for pupils affected and through appropriate liaison with local safeguarding partners. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online, and implements effective monitoring and filtering of the use of the school's internet.
- 2.8 Staff understand and implement the school's code of conduct effectively. The school has effective recruitment procedures. The DSL and deputies provide sufficient cover for their role, including in boarding and the sixth form. They have sufficient capacity to continue to do so once the proposed increase in pupil numbers takes place.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour and bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 9 and 10; NMS 15 and 16]

2.9 The school meets the standards.

2.10 Since the previous inspection, leaders have acted successfully to strengthen pupils' understanding of the school's behavioural expectations, particularly with regard to the promotion of respect towards those with protected characteristics. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors conveyed that the school acts decisively in this regard. Staff address such issues during lessons and senior leaders support pupils advocating on behalf of diverse groups to have a voice. Pupils who took part in the discussions also stated that, while there remained some behaviour that they find annoying or immature, behaviour in the school has improved since the previous inspection. That includes the behaviour of male pupils towards female pupils. Pupils said that inappropriate behaviour, such as offensive racist, homophobic or sexist language, always needs to be 'called out'. Inspection evidence shows that senior leaders take effective steps to improve the behaviour of the small number of pupils who demonstrate a lack of respect towards those with protected characteristics. Scrutiny of behavioural records demonstrates that, as well as applying appropriate sanctions whenever such respect is not shown, the school acts effectively to develop pupils' awareness of the reasons why disrespectful behaviour is not trivial or to be tolerated.

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 2]

2.12 The school meets the standards.

2.13 Leaders and governors have taken decisive and effective measures to implement the actions set out in response to the findings of the previous inspection. As a result, those with governance, leadership and management responsibilities ensure the independent school standards are met consistently and actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

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 National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

4. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Summary of findings

- 4.1 The school has sufficient staff and suitable premises to cater for the needs of the proposed maximum number of pupils.

Recommendation

- 4.2 It is recommended that the school's proposal, to increase the maximum number of pupils from 1,050 to 1,150, be approved.

5. Summary of evidence

5.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors and safeguarding governor. They talked with separate groups of male and female pupils and scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mr Steven Popper

Reporting inspector

Mrs Kate McCarey

Assistant reporting inspector