

KINGSHOTT SCHOOL

St Ippolyts, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 7JX

16TH NOVEMBER 2016

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Kingshott School is a co-educational day preparatory school for pupils aged from three to thirteen. Founded in 1931, the school became a charitable trust under the guidance of a board of governors in 1980. It occupies a Georgian house with extensive modern additions in a rural site, near Hitchin in Hertfordshire.

At the time of the visit there were 407 pupils; 239 boys and 168 girls, in the school. Of these, 71 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Thirty-one pupils require and receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); none has a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan. One pupil receives support for English as an additional language (EAL).

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This was an announced visit carried out at the request of the Department of Education to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the emergency visit on 15 March 2016. The focus of the visit was on safeguarding, supervision of pupils, risk assessment, provision of information, the handling of complaints and the leadership and management of the school.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b)]

The school meets the Regulation.

The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. The implementation of the policy provides suitable support for pupils' needs. Safeguarding procedures have been thoroughly reviewed since the previous visit. A new designated senior lead (DSL) has taken up her role. In addition, four other senior staff are suitably trained, and all staff have current safeguarding training. Safeguarding records are kept securely, and the school liaises effectively and promptly with local safeguarding agencies to support pupils. Where necessary, the school refers cases to the Disqualification and Barring Service (DBS) and the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). The school's safeguarding procedures have recently been updated in line with the revised requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (September 2016), and all staff and volunteers have received recent training on the changes, including the dangers associated with 'sexting', 'banter' and other forms of peer abuse, the vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND and the role of early help. They have also been trained in the prevention of radicalisation. The school has an efficient system to monitor and restrict internet use.

Staff interviewed know how to recognise different types of abuse, know how to react to a disclosure, and how this should be reported. They understand their recent training, and feel confident to approach the DSL for support and guidance. They understand the school's whistleblowing arrangements, and the staff code of conduct relating to safeguarding and the use of mobile devices.

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

The school meets the Regulation.

The school has reviewed its arrangements for the supervision of pupils, both on site and for trips and outings. These are outlined in a detailed policy, ensuring that suitable arrangements are in place. The records relating to several recent trips were scrutinised, and showed a thorough process is followed by all staff, which includes a subsequent review of how efficiently the trip was managed. Staff confirmed that senior staff show rigour in checking the arrangements are followed. Staffing ratios are high, and the role and responsibilities of all adults involved are made clear prior to the trip.

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

The school meets the Regulation.

The school has strengthened its risk assessment arrangements. A standardised format is now used, and all trips now follow a clear procedure, and examples seen show that potential hazards are identified and addressed appropriately. Senior staff review all trips, which do not proceed without prior authorisation. Procedures for managing risk in activities on the school site are thorough, and understood by the relevant staff. This includes the many sporting activities which take place on site, as well as away fixtures.

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

The school meets the Regulation.

The school meets the requirements for providing information to parents relating to safeguarding. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website, and the arrangements outlined are those currently implemented in the school.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33]

The school meets the Regulation.

The operation of the school's complaints policy has also been reviewed and the wording of the policy meets regulatory requirements. A scrutiny of the records shows that the school follows appropriate procedures. Complaints are now recorded and identified clearly, along with the school's response and any subsequent actions.

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

The school meets the Regulation.

The new leadership of the school and the governing body have worked together to ensure the issues identified in the previous visit have been addressed. A new management structure is now in place, along with the substantive appointment of a new headmaster. The safeguarding arrangements have been strengthened, and prompt and decisive action is taken when safeguarding concerns arise. The policies relating to the supervision of pupils and assessment of risk have also been reviewed and new thorough procedures are in place. Complaints are properly recorded, and handled, according to the school's published policies.

There has been a review of governance, and governors have received training to help them to carry out their role effectively; this has included a thorough review of safeguarding, and close supervision of the arrangements for school trips. Any complaints are discussed at each full board meeting.

All staff interviewed expressed their confidence in the new arrangements, and feel confident to approach senior staff or governors with concerns or suggestions.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

The school meets the relevant requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and no further action is required.