

## Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

<b>School name</b>	Polwhele House School			
<b>DfE number</b>	908/6076			
<b>Address</b>	Polwhele House Truro Cornwall TR4 9AE			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Chris Curl			
<b>Proprietors</b>	Canon Richard White and Mrs Rosemary White			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	97			
	<b>Boys</b>	53	<b>Girls</b>	44
	<b>Day pupils</b>	90	<b>Boarders</b>	7
	<b>EYFS</b>	19	<b>Pre-prep (including EYFS)</b>	38
	<b>Prep</b>	59		
<b>Date of visit</b>	20 June 2019			

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Polwhele House School is a coeducational boarding and day school for pupils between the ages of three and thirteen years. It is situated close to Truro in Cornwall. Boarding provision is available from Year 3, and a small number of pupils board from one to four nights per week. The school was founded in 1976 and moved to its present site in 1981. The school is owned and run by two proprietors and the headmaster is responsible to them. They are assisted by a managing council of advisers with suitable experience and expertise. The school has seven pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, none of whom have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Two pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in October 2018.

### 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 compliance inspection on 30 October and 1 November 2018.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding) and 8 safeguarding of boarders]; NMS 11 (child protection)	Remain unmet
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 6 (safety of boarders)	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 7 (fire precautions)	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6 (safety of boarders)	Met
ISSR Part 4, paragraph 18 (appointment of staff) and 20 (suitability of proprietors); NMS 14 (staff recruitment)	18(3) remains unmet and, as a consequence, so is 18(2)(f) and NMS 14.1.
ISSR Part 4, paragraph 19 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	19(2)(a)(ii) and 19(2)(d)(ii) remain unmet and, as a consequence, so is 19(2)(e) and NMS 14.1.
ISSR Part 4, paragraph 21 (the single central register of appointments)	Met
ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 13 (leadership and management)	34 (1)(a) and (b), and NMS 13.3 and 13.4 remain unmet

## 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 does not meet the standards.
- 2.4 Since the previous inspection visit, the school continues to safeguard and promote the welfare and well-being of pupils in many respects. Training for the designated safeguarding leads and for the head and rest of the staff is up to date and has included coverage of the additional issues outlined in the latest version of government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018). Induction for staff new to the school includes the required elements and the issue of the necessary documentation. Staff interviewed showed a suitable understanding of the correct reporting and referral procedures in the event of concerns about a pupil's welfare or as a result of an allegation about a member of staff or the head. The school demonstrated correct procedures when contacting the local authority about pupils' welfare. The proprietors review safeguarding arrangements regularly, although details of the process undergone is not recorded in detail in their minutes.
- 2.5 The school has carried out correct recruitment procedures on staff joining the school in most respects. However, in a few cases, staff have been allowed to start work before all references have been received or the necessary checks of prohibition from management and/or teaching completed.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 6]**

- 2.6 The school meets the standards.
- 2.7 The school has an effective procedure to maintain a safe environment and safe working practices, by implementing an appropriate health and safety policy and ensuring that health and safety matters are suitably reviewed and monitored, and records kept as necessary.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 7]**

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.
- 2.9 The school ensures that fire safety regulations are known and implemented. An appropriate fire prevention policy and fire risk assessment have been drawn up, and necessary action taken as a result. Fire evacuation drills have been regularly held, including in boarding time, and recorded.

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

- 2.10 The school meets the standards.
- 2.11 The school has a suitable risk assessment policy in place which provides a sound foundation for staff to draw up a clear assessment of risk for their areas of the school and for off-site trips. Sample risk assessments scrutinised showed an improved understanding of the process, and completed risk assessments are effectively reviewed for completeness.

**Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21; NMS 14]**

- 2.12 The school does not meet all of the standards.
- 2.13 The school carries out the required pre-recruitment checks on staff and other adults in a timely manner, in nearly all respects. One member started work before the medical fitness check had been obtained, and the school has not obtained a copy of the criminal records disclosure for all those staff recruited from and checked by an employment agency.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the requirement 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]**

- 2.15 The school does not meet all of the standards.
- 2.16 The school has made significant progress in implementing their inspection action plan in many respects. Boarding is appropriately managed. Leaders and managers ensure that staff actively promote the well-being of pupils. However, proprietors, leaders and managers do not yet have a sufficiently firm grasp of the requirements to ensure that all regulations are consistently met. As a result, procedures for ensuring a fully rigorous staff recruitment process are not sufficiently robust, and the process is not yet monitored efficiently enough to ensure that all required checks are completed before staff start work.

### 3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

#### **ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraph 7 and 8, and NMS 11**

- Ensure that references are obtained and prohibition checks are carried out before staff start work in the school [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 11].

#### **ISSR Part 4, Suitability of staff, paragraphs 18 and 19 and NMS 14**

- Ensure that checks of medical fitness are obtained before staff start work [paragraphs 18(3) and, as a consequence, 18 (2)(f) and NMS 14.1].
- Ensure that copies of any criminal records disclosures received by an employment agency are obtained by the school before such agency staff start work [paragraphs 19 (2)(a)(ii) and 19 (2)(d)(ii) and, as a consequence, 19(2)(e), and NMS 14.1].

#### **ISSR Part 8, Quality of leadership and management [paragraph 34; NMS 13]**

- Ensure that proprietors, leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met [paragraph 34 (1)(a) and (b), and NMS 13.3 and 13.4].

## 4. Summary of evidence

### Written materials

- Safeguarding policy
- Records of staff training with particular reference to safeguarding
- Code of conduct for staff
- Staff recruitment policy
- Boarding handbook
- Health and safety policy
- Fire prevention policy
- Risk assessment policy and sample risk assessments, including those for fire safety
- Records kept in respect of health and safety
- Single central register of appointments and staff personnel files

### Meetings with school personnel

- Introductory meeting with head – to discuss arrangements for the day and to provide initial thoughts on areas specified as focus for the visit
- Meeting with the deputy DSL together with the head – to discuss implementation of safeguarding policy, training and induction of new staff
- Meeting with bursar – to discuss health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment arrangements
- Two further meetings with the bursar– to review school’s recruitment procedures, to scrutinise single central register of appointments and to check staff recruitment files
- Meeting with the boarding housemother
- Meeting with the two proprietors

### Activities on site

- Further scrutiny and evaluation of implementation of policies and documentation (as detailed above)
- Tour of the school, including boarding accommodation
- Interviews with pupils, including boarders, in Years 5 and 6, chosen by inspectors
- Interview with a group of teaching and non-teaching staff, chosen by the inspectors
- Meeting of inspectors
- Brief oral feedback to the school