



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

## **Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit**

**Polwhele House School**

**March 2020**



## School's details

|                                 |   |    |                 |    |
|---------------------------------|---|----|-----------------|----|
| <b>School</b>                   | Polwhele House School   |    |                 |    |
| <b>DfE number</b>               | 908/6076  |    |                 |    |
| <b>Address</b>                  | Polwhele House School<br>Polwhele House<br>Truro<br>Cornwall<br>TR4 9AE |    |                 |    |
| <b>Telephone number</b>         | 01872 273011  |    |                 |    |
| <b>Email address</b>            | info@polwhelehouse.co.uk  |    |                 |    |
| <b>Headteacher</b>              | Mrs Hilary Mann   |    |                 |    |
| <b>Proprietors</b>              | Canon Richard White and Mrs Rosemary White                              |    |                 |    |
| <b>Age range</b>                | 3 to 13   |    |                 |    |
| <b>Number of pupils on roll</b> | 97  |    |                 |    |
|                                 | <b>Day pupils</b>   | 88 | <b>Boarders</b> | 9  |
|                                 | <b>EYFS</b>   | 19 | <b>Pre-prep</b> | 18 |
|                                 | <b>Prep</b>   | 60 |                 |    |
| <b>Date of visit</b>            | 11 March 2020   |    |                 |    |

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Polwhele House School is an independent co-educational 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; a small number of pupils board from one to four nights each week. The school was founded in 1976, and moved to its present site in 1981. It is owned and overseen by two proprietors, who are assisted by a managing council of advisers with suitable experience and expertise. The school has 14 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, none of whom have an education, health and care plan. One pupil speaks English as an additional language. The school's previous inspections were a focused compliance and education quality inspection in October 2018 and a subsequent progress monitoring visit in June 2019.

### 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 progress monitoring visit on 20 June 2019.

| Regulations which were the focus of the visit                                    | Team judgements |
|--|-----------------|
| Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8 (safeguarding); NMS 11; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9              | Remain unmet    |
| Part 4, paragraph 18 (suitability of staff and supply staff); NMS 14.1; EYFS 3.9 | Remain unmet    |
| Part 4, paragraph 19 (suitability of staff and supply staff); NMS 14.1; EYFS 3.9 | Met             |
| Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)                            | Met             |
| Part 8, paragraph 34 (quality of leadership and management); NMS 13              | Remain unmet    |

## 2. Inspection findings

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9]**

#### **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 or the requirements.
- 2.4 Across the school, staff have a clear understanding about the procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child to ensure that any needs are promptly supported. Staff with delegated safeguarding lead (DSL) responsibilities all have appropriate levels of training, which is in line with local authority procedures. The DSL ensures that staff receive regular training on safeguarding implementation, alongside informal updates during staff meetings relating to any changes in safeguarding implementation. Comprehensive induction for new staff provides them with a clear understanding of their responsibilities. During discussions, staff demonstrated a concise understanding of the whistleblowing procedure should the need to use it arise. Suitable safeguarding records are maintained and closely monitored by the DSL to ensure that pupils receive the right help at the right time; all are securely stored. Appropriate filtering systems are in place to monitor online access and talks, such as those on e-safety, raise pupils' awareness of the dangers of social media. During discussions, pupils commented that they feel extremely safe and well cared for. They state that staff are very approachable and always willing to listen and help with any concerns or worries that they may have.
- 2.5 The school has made progress since the previous progress monitoring visit, by ensuring that all staff, for whom it is appropriate, are checked against the prohibition from management and teaching lists. However, for a very small number of staff, the required references have not always been sought before they begin work at the school.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 and 19; NMS 14.1; EYFS 3.9]**

- 2.6 The school does not meet all of the standards or the requirements.
- 2.7 An appropriate register of staff appointments is kept as required. Since the previous visit, the school have ensured that it has obtained a copy of the criminal records disclosure for all those staff recruited from, and checked by, an employment agency. However, for a staff member recently recruited directly, the school has failed to undertake the required pre-employment medical check on some staff before they began work.

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

- 2.8 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]**

2.9 The school does not meet the standards.

2.10 The proprietor has not ensured that those with leadership and management responsibilities have the required good skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and actively promote the well-being of pupils. This is due to not having due regard for the current statutory guidance for staff recruitment checks.

### 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 requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

#### **ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraph 7 and 8; NMS 11; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9**

- Ensure that references are sought prior to staff starting work at the school [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9]

#### **ISSR Part 4, Suitability of staff, paragraph 18; NMS 14; EYFS 3.9**

- Ensure that medical fitness checks are undertaken for all newly appointed staff prior to them starting work at the school [paragraph 18(2)(c)(ii); 18(2)(f); 18(3); NMS 14.1; EYFS 3.9]

#### **ISSR Part 8, Leadership and management, paragraph 34; NMS 13**

- Ensure that leadership and management acquire the good skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the standards are met consistently, and pupils' well-being is actively promoted [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.3 - 13.5].

## **4. Summary of evidence**

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other members of staff and met with the proprietors. They talked with groups of pupils and scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.