



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

St Winefride's School

December 2020



School's details

School name	St Winefride's School			
DfE number	893/6012			
Registered charity number	1037597			
Address	St Winefride's School Belmont Shrewsbury Shropshire SY1 1TE			
Telephone number	01743 369883			
Email address	head@stwinefridesircs.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Devey			
Chair of trustees	Mr Patrick Strong			
Age Range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	130			
	EYFS	25	Infants	38
	Juniors	67		
Date of visit	10 December 2020			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 St Winefride’s School is an independent co-educational day school, situated close to the centre of the town of Shrewsbury. It was founded in 1868 by the Sisters of Mercy and is located next to a convent of the order, with which it has close links. The school became a charitable trust in 1993 and is governed by a board of trustees. The school has identified eleven pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, of whom one has an education, health and care plan. Six pupils have English as an additional language. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2020.

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 focused compliance and educational quality inspection in October 2019.
- 1.3 A review of the school’s progress in implementing its action plan was undertaken remotely on 6 October 2020 but further evidence was needed, through a visit, to verify fully the school’s compliance. This on-site visit took into consideration the evidence gathered during the remote review as well as evidence from the visit.

Regulations which are the focus of the visit/inspection	Team judgements
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid)	Met
ISSR Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan)	Met
ISSR Part 4, paragraph 20 (suitability of proprietor and governors)	Met
ISSR Part 5, paragraph 24 (premises and accommodation)	Met
ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints procedure);	Met
ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

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 standard.
- 2.4 The remote review found that all staff, including those with responsibility for safeguarding, are suitably trained in line with national guidance and locally agreed safeguarding arrangements. Trustees ensure that those with specific responsibility for safeguarding are given sufficient time and resources to carry out their roles effectively. A suitable code of conduct, which includes advice on e-safety and the appropriate use of social media, is implemented effectively and understood by all staff. Staff report that they would feel confident to use the school's whistleblowing procedures and would feel happy to make a referral directly to children's social services should the need arise.
- 2.5 The school works effectively with its local safeguarding partners, including in implementing its arrangements to handle peer-on-peer abuse. The school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) seeks advice and support from the local authority and acts appropriately to follow up any incidents. The school's safeguarding team ensures that it places the safety of the pupils at the centre of all its interactions with outside agencies. Pupils are listened to when they express concerns and suitable action is taken. Any referrals are made in a timely manner and the school understands that the police should be informed immediately following any criminal offence. Parents are kept suitably informed of all safeguarding matters relating to their children.
- 2.6 The on-site visit found evidence to support all of these findings. It was apparent from discussions that staff and senior leaders felt that, since the start of the current school year, procedures for safeguarding and the way in which all staff work together to ensure the safety of pupils had improved significantly. Inspection evidence supports these views. Suitable measures, which have been continually revised in the light of governmental guidance, have been put in place to protect pupils and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.7 The remote review identified the need for further evidence to show that trustees have adequate understanding of the regulatory requirements and exercise sufficient oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements and safer recruitment process. During the on-site visit, it was evident that the trustees have taken steps to improve their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding requirements since the previous visit, including undertaking safeguarding training themselves. They exercise appropriate oversight of safeguarding.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12]

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.
- 2.9 The remote review found, and the on-site visit confirmed, that the school has a suitable fire risk and safety policy. Fire risk assessments have been undertaken for all school buildings. A senior member of staff has been appointed as fire officer and has been appropriately trained. There is an effective system for recording all maintenance checks undertaken relating to fire-safety equipment and

associated electrical installations, including alarms. Fire drills are undertaken regularly to ensure staff and pupils understand the safest manner and direction to evacuate the school buildings.

- 2.10 The remote review indicated that issues identified by the external fire risk assessment had not been followed up with a comprehensive action plan to remedy any identified deficiencies and that there was a lack of effective oversight and rigour in this area. The subsequent on-site visit found that the school had made significant progress in these areas since the remote review. The fire officer has been given responsibility for overseeing the school's arrangements for fire safety and ensuring that actions identified on the fire risk assessment are followed up. Evidence presented confirms that the school now has a suitable plan for dealing with identified issues, many of which have already been rectified, and other less urgent actions have been planned for completion during the holiday period. A tour of the school indicated that the responsible person has a thorough grasp of all matters pertaining to fire safety. Trustees are providing effective oversight by ensuring that progress in addressing the fire safety action plan is discussed at its regular trustee meetings.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – first aid [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13]

- 2.11 The school meets the standard.
- 2.12 The remote review found, and the on-site visit confirmed, that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first-aid policy. Staff, including those working in the EYFS, are suitably trained. The school ensures that at least one person who has a current paediatric first-aid certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present. There are suitable arrangements in place for all matters relating to first aid, including the administering of medicines, the reporting of accidents and the recording of all relevant information. Parents are kept suitably informed of any accidents that might occur.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 – accessibility plan

- 2.13 The school meets the requirement.
- 2.14 Both the remote review and the on-site visit found that the school fulfils its duties under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 by the drawing up and effective implementation of a suitable accessibility plan.

Suitability of proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraph 20]

- 2.15 The school meets the standard.
- 2.16 The remote review found that checks on staff, including part-time members, are carried out effectively but that the chair of the trustees had not had an enhanced DBS check countersigned by the Secretary of State, as required. The on-site visit found that the school acted immediately following the remote review, submitting an appropriate application although, at the time of the visit, a reply had not yet been received. Evidence shows that the school had undertaken all of the required checks for the chair when first becoming a trustee.

Premises and accommodation – medical facilities [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 24]

- 2.17 The school meets the standard.
- 2.18 The remote review and the on-site visit found that suitable accommodation is provided for the medical examination of pupils and for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. The medical room has its own washing facilities with hot and cold running water and is adjacent to appropriate toilet facilities.

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

- 2.19 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.

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

- 2.20 The school meets the standard.
- 2.21 The remote review found that the school has an effective complaints procedure which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils covering all the required information and that the procedures are implemented effectively. The school ensures that all complaints are dealt with within the stated timescales. Suitable written records are kept of all formal complaints, indicating whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing, and recording action taken as a result of these complaints whether they are upheld or not.
- 2.22 The on-site visit corroborated the findings of the remote review and found that any complaint received after the remote review had been handled and recorded in accordance with procedures set out in the complaints policy.

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

- 2.23 The school meets the standard.
- 2.24 The remote review identified the need for further evidence to enable confirmation that the requirements of the standard were met.
- 2.25 The on-site visit found that the trustees and the school's senior leaders had made much progress in the three months since the appointment of a new headteacher in implementing procedures to oversee all aspects of the school's work. Communication within the senior leadership team, between senior leaders and trustees and with the rest of the staff is effective. Trustees have implemented a suitably rigorous programme for holding senior leaders to account and have taken steps to join a professional association in order to receive further guidance on how to ensure effective oversight. Aspects such as reviewing the effectiveness of the school's procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils are now included and recorded in the minutes of all meetings of the trustees. Oversight of fire safety is effective. Leaders responsible for safeguarding have undertaken a detailed audit of safeguarding procedures and practice using an audit tool produced by the local authority and were awaiting feedback from the local authority at the time of the on-site visit. Training of staff in matters such as safeguarding, first aid and fire safety is now suitable. Trustees and the school's leaders have identified sources of further guidance and support which they have used effectively to improve their knowledge and understanding of regulatory requirements.
- 2.26 The above evidence confirms that the school's trustees and senior leaders now demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently and the well-being of pupils is promoted actively.

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 requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the school's trustees. They also visited different areas of the school. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.