



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Terra Nova School

Progress Monitoring Visit

1st October 2014

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Full Name of School	Terra Nova School
DfE Number	895/6006
Registered Charity Number	525919
Address	Terra Nova School Jodrell Bank Holmes Chapel Crewe Cheshire CW4 8BT
Telephone Number	01477 571251
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Email Address	Enquiries@terranovaschool.co.uk
Chair of Governors	Mr Martin Hallam
Head	Mr Mark Mitchell
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	271
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (155 boys; 116 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 63 11-13: 42 5-11: 166
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 169
Number of Boarders	Total: 102 Flexi: 102
Date of previous inspection	11 to 14 February 2014
Date of visit	1 October 2014

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Terra Nova School was founded in 1902 as a boarding school for boys, moving to its current location near Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, in 1939. It is a charitable trust, providing education to boys and girls aged 3 to 13. The work of the school is overseen by a governing body, whose members come from a variety of backgrounds, and supported by six sub-committees.

There are currently 271 pupils on roll (155 boys and 116 girls), including 63 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and 42 in Years 7 and 8. 102 pupils from the ages of 7 to 13 are boarders, of whom between 10 and 40 stay each evening. The school has identified 57 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and one pupil has a statement of SEND. Three pupils have English as an additional language, of whom two receive support for their English.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This was an announced visit carried out at the request of the DfE to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the school's action plan prepared after the integrated inspection on 11th to 14th February 2014. The focus of the visit was on areas of welfare, health and safety, suitability of staff and proprietors, premises and accommodation, boarders' contact with parents and an independent listener, fire training, and the handling of complaints.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

A wide range of documentation was studied before and during the visit, including policies on safeguarding children's welfare, recruitment of staff, health and safety, mobile phones, fire procedures and risk assessments, code of conduct for staff, and the handling of complaints. Written guidance and handbooks for staff, parents and pupils including boarders were studied. The single central register (SCR) of staff appointments and a selection of staff files were inspected, together with records of fire drills and training, safeguarding training, recruitment correspondence and related email communications. Minutes and agendas of meetings of the full board of governors, the health and safety and safeguarding sub-committee, and committees of senior staff were studied, as well as specific action or development plans for health and safety and for boarding.

Meetings were held with the head, the bursar, the designated safeguarding lead and head of boarding, and the governor with particular responsibility for safeguarding. Telephone discussions were held with the chairman of governors and the independent listener. Interviews were held with ten Year 5 pupils and eight Year 7 pupils, both day and boarding, and with ten members of the teaching staff, four members of the support staff and four gap students, all chosen randomly by the inspectors. Inspectors had a tour of relevant parts of the school. Feedback was provided to the headmaster, bursar, designated safeguarding lead/head of boarding, head of junior school, head of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

The pupils interviewed were enthusiastic and complimentary about all aspects of the school and the educational and social opportunities it offers them. They felt completely safe in school and were able to explain why. They felt supported by all the teaching and support staff, and were emphatic in confirming that there was a wide range of staff to whom they could turn if they had any concerns. The pupils were also well-informed about the various sources of help available outside school and how to make contact with them. They were extremely positive about boarding and the range of activities available, as well as the quality

of food, and many found it hard to think of anything they would want to improve at the school.

Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils – ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8, and NMS 11

The Regulations and Standard are met.

The school has made significant progress in ensuring that the governing body carries out an annual review of the safeguarding policy and of the efficiency with which the related duties are carried out. The policy itself has been thoroughly revised in the light of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and all governors have been made aware of the changes introduced. Safeguarding is now an agenda item at every meeting of the full governing body in addition to relevant matters being raised in advance at the health and safety and safeguarding sub-committee each term. In addition to heightened awareness of safeguarding matters by governors, and more formal visits to the school by the governor with particular responsibility for safeguarding in order to discuss related matters with relevant senior staff, an annual review of safeguarding by the whole governing body is to take place at its autumn term meeting. A detailed agenda for this review has already been prepared as a specific and major item on the agenda of the board of governors' meeting in November 2014, and governors have recognised the need to ensure that a detailed record is to be kept of the relevant discussion to reflect both the breadth and the depth of the review. Governors are now aware of the training that is available that could lead to more effective monitoring.

Arrangements to ensure that fire training for all staff is correctly recorded – ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13, and NMS 7.1

The Regulation and Standard are met.

The school has taken extensive measures to implement the training of staff in fire safety and to record this. In addition to already existing arrangements for fire drills and for the testing of fire equipment, training in fire safety has been held for all staff at the beginning of the autumn term 2014. This has taken the form of both training delivered at the school covering issues such as current legislation, practical fire safety, the role of the fire warden, fire risk assessments and use of fire prevention equipment, and also online training which, in addition to some of the above, has included training in the nature of fire and the different responses that may be needed. Appropriate records are kept of staff attendance at training sessions and of staff completion of the online modules, as well as the dates on which such training has been undertaken, whether in person or online.

Arrangements to ensure that declarations of medical fitness are obtained for peripatetic staff before starting work and are recorded on the single central register – ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 19 and 22, and for the same reason Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8, and NMS 14.1

The Regulations and Standard are met.

The required change to recruitment procedures has been implemented with the result that declarations of medical fitness are appropriately obtained for peripatetic staff before starting work at the school. This may take place before or after the date of appointment as part of the recruitment procedure but in all cases it is now carried out before the member of staff takes up the position. Medical declarations are now recorded routinely on the single central register of appointments.

Provision of appropriate privacy in showers in the boarding accommodation – ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23(h), and NMS 5.3

The Regulation and Standard are met.

The school has taken all necessary steps to ensure privacy for boys and girls when changing and having showers. New facilities have been installed and existing facilities adapted effectively. As a result, pupils are now able to get dried and dressed in private. Pupils expressed complete satisfaction with the new arrangements and felt comfortable when taking showers.

The handling of complaints – ISSR Part 7, paragraph 25, and NMS 18

The Regulation and Standard are met.

The complaints policy has been extensively rewritten to incorporate appropriate timescales for the handling of complaints, and to enable its effective implementation. The policy is published on the school's website and made available for inspection on the school premises during the school day.

Boarders' induction and support – NMS 2.3

The Standard is met.

The school has appointed an independent listener other than a school parent, outside the boarding and teaching staff of the school, whom boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. The school ensures that boarders know who the person is and how to contact her by displaying relevant information prominently throughout the school and the boarding house, and by referring to the independent listener on particular occasions such as school assemblies. The independent listener arranges drop-in sessions on a regular basis and can be contacted by pupils between visits. Pupils were fully aware of the independent listener's name and contact details.

Contact with parents/carers – NMS 4

The Standard is met.

The school has provided a permanently charged mobile phone within the boarding house which boarders are able to use to contact their parents privately. The phone may be taken to one of a number of locations in the boarding accommodation, so that pupils are always able to use the phone in a place where they feel comfortable and have appropriate privacy. Pupils expressed full satisfaction with the arrangement, although the shelf on which the phone rests might be rather high for the youngest pupils. There is some uncertainty among pupils over the procedure for gaining access to the phone outside 'boarding time', almost certainly because of the recent introduction of the facility, but boarders were in no doubt of their ability to contact parents in private should they need to, since in addition to the new mobile phone, boarders can also easily access a landline in the medical room which is made available by the matron.

Conclusions

The school has implemented its action plan effectively and has taken all necessary steps to ensure compliance with the Regulations and Standards identified in the Action Points of the previous inspection. Evidence clearly indicates that the school has taken the findings of the previous inspection and the shortcomings identified

very seriously, and its response has been comprehensive and energetic. The school and the governors have recognised the need for monitoring and oversight to continue to be given a high priority.

ACTION POINTS

Compliance with regulatory requirements

No further initiatives or actions are required to complete implementation of the school's action plan. No further action is required to meet the Regulations and Standards inspected.

Recommendations

1. When carrying out its annual review of the school's safeguarding practices, the governing body is advised to ensure that its findings are recorded in sufficient detail to reflect the breadth and depth of the review.
2. The school is advised to encourage governors to make use of available training opportunities to support their monitoring role and functions.
3. The school is advised to ensure that pupils understand and can make full use of the arrangements for access to the mobile phone for boarders.