

THE ORATORY PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Goring Heath, Reading, Oxfordshire, RG8 7SF

27 APRIL 2018

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Oratory Preparatory School is a day and boarding co-educational school for pupils between the ages of 2 and 13 years. It is a Roman Catholic school and, with the Oratory Senior School, is part of The Oratory Schools Association which is a registered charity. Although run as separate schools, they share the same governing body. At the time of the visit there were 277 boys and 162 girls on roll, of whom 22 were boarders. The school has identified 51 pupils as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, none of whom have a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or education, health and care plan. Forty-two pupils have English as an additional language, of whom twenty receive support.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This was an unannounced progress monitoring visit at the request of the Department for Education to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the Regulatory Compliance Inspection in November 2017. The focus of the visit was on safeguarding, the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and the quality of leadership and management.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b) & 8 (a) and (b); NMS 11]

The school does not meet all of the regulations.

The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. This policy is supported by suitable guidance on whistleblowing and a code of conduct for staff.

The school's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school are exemplary in almost all respects. Safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has undertaken inter-agency training provided by the local authority, as have several other senior members of staff who hold responsibilities for the EYFS and boarding. Induction training for new staff covers all the required elements and includes online as well as face to face training with the DSL. All staff undertake regular refresher training which includes the prevention of radicalisation and they receive safeguarding updates as necessary. They demonstrate a clear awareness of their shared responsibility for safeguarding and the need to report any concerns immediately. The designated governor for safeguarding has received appropriate training and maintains regular contact with the DSL who attends governors' meetings to inform their oversight of arrangements and issues. The school uses a secure software system effectively, to record and manage concerns. Pupils' emotional and mental welfare is seen as a priority and early support given as soon as a concern is identified. Records confirm timely and appropriate liaison with parents and children's services.

Since the previous inspection the school has ensured that, should there be a delay in receiving confirmation of an enhanced DBS, it obtains a separate barred list check and that a risk assessment and appropriate safeguards are put in place in accordance with the requirements of statutory guidance. It now ensures that written confirmation is obtained from contractors that the required checks have been made and retains this evidence in personnel files. However due to a misunderstanding, checks against the prohibition from teaching lists have not been carried out for staff appointed over the last year, which results in overall non-compliance with statutory guidance and is the reason why all the standards for safeguarding are not yet met.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraph 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(f), 18(3); paragraph 21(3)(a)(i-viii) and (b); and NMS 14.1]

The school does not meet all the regulations.

The school has made significant progress in implementing its action plan from the previous inspection relating to pre-recruitment checks, so that most of the action points have been resolved. The new staff appointed to manage this area have been diligent in rectifying the previous shortcomings, re-verifying checks and ensuring that the evidence held in staff personnel files provides evidence that the required checks have been undertaken prior to the commencement of employment. The school now has evidence to show that the required checks to ensure the suitability of staff including those working with boarders, notably those for qualifications, are completed prior to the commencement of employment.

Since the previous inspection, the school has completed the migration of its recruitment records from a manual record to an electronic version. Much of the SCR now provides a clear and accurate record of pre-recruitment checks. However, although the SCR confirms that checks of the right to work, the barred list, and prohibition from management were made, and staff files contain evidence of these checks, it does not include the date on which the checks were made, as required.

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

The school meets the regulation.

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.

The quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (a) and (b) and NMS 13.1, 13.3 and 13.4]

The school does not meet all of the regulations.

The school's leadership actively promotes the well-being of pupils through robust implementation of its safeguarding policy and procedures and through thorough arrangements to promote pupils' pastoral and welfare needs. The school's governing body has taken positive steps to strengthen its oversight of recruitment checks, extending governors' understanding of regulatory requirements, undertaking regular meetings with relevant staff and spot checks of staff files and the SCR, as well as supporting the school in increasing the number of staff engaged to undertake personnel administration. Similarly, senior leaders play an active part in monitoring the completion of recruitment checks. Consequently, recruitment procedures are now significantly improved. However, shortcomings in checking those involved in teaching activity against the prohibition from teaching list and in recording the dates on which some checks were undertaken on the SCR mean that all the Independent School Standards are not yet being consistently met.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8 (a) and (b) and for the same reason NMS 11]

- Ensure that the school’s arrangements for the recruitment of staff pay due regard to statutory guidance by checking that staff involved in teaching activities are not prohibited from teaching.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraph 21(3)(a)(ii),(iii),(vii), (b) and for the same reason NMS 14.1]

- Ensure that all checks are recorded as required on the school’s single central register of appointments by including the date on which each check was verified.

The quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (a) and (b) and for the same reason NMS 13.1, 13.3 and 13.4]

- Ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that all the Independent School Standards and National Minimum Standards for boarding are met consistently.