

THE ORATORY SCHOOL

Woodcote, Reading, Oxfordshire, RG8 0PJ

27 APRIL 2018

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Oratory School is a boarding and day school for boys between the ages of 11 and 18. It is a Roman Catholic school, which accepts boys of all faiths or none. The school and the Oratory Preparatory School are part of The Oratory Schools Association, a registered charity; they are run as separate schools but share the same governing body. Founded in 1859 by Blessed John Henry Newman, the school has been on its present rural site since 1942. Boys normally join at age 11 or 13; junior boarders (Years 7 and 8) are housed in St Philip House, and boys join one of four senior boarding houses in Year 9. At the time of the visit, there were 248 pupils on roll, of whom 137 were boarders. The school has 79 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of whom have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Fifty-two pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL).

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 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 thorough and implemented effectively in almost all respects. Previously identified deficiencies in the training of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies have been rectified through the appointment of a new DSL and a new deputy DSL who have both been fully trained. They have strengthened the training procedures for new staff and ensure that all staff receive regular update training as necessary. They demonstrate a clear awareness of their shared responsibility for safeguarding, the need to report any concerns immediately and the procedures to follow should there be a disclosure of abuse or an allegation against an adult working in the school. 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 DSL has implemented a new secure software system to record any concerns and to facilitate the flow of information to those staff who need to be

made aware of those concerns. Record-keeping is thorough, and there is appropriate liaison with parents and children's services.

Since the previous inspection, the school has ensured that, should there be a delay in receiving a new appointee's certificate to show that an enhanced criminal record (DBS) check has been undertaken, it obtains a separate barred list check, undertakes a risk assessment and ensures that 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 on any of their staff working in the school and retains this evidence in personnel files. However, due to a misunderstanding, checks against the list of those prohibited from teaching have not been carried out for staff appointed over the last year, which results in overall non-compliance with statutory guidance and the reason why the school does not yet meet all of the standards for safeguarding.

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 of the regulations.

The school has made significant progress in implementing its action plan and dealing with deficiencies identified at the previous inspection with regard to the checks made on new staff and proprietors before they start work. As a result, 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 for all existing staff 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. As part of this process, the school has completed the migration of its recruitment records from a manual record to an electronic version. Much of the single central register of appointments (SCR) now provides a clear and accurate record of pre-recruitment checks. However, although the SCR confirms that checks of the right to work in the UK, the barred list and prohibition from management were made, and staff files contain evidence for these checks, the SCR does not record as required the date on which these checks were made.

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 standards.

The school's leaders actively promote the well-being of pupils through the implementation of its safeguarding policy and procedures and through extensive arrangements to cater for pupils' pastoral and welfare needs. The governing body and senior leaders have taken positive steps to strengthen the oversight of procedures for checking the suitability of staff, undertaking regular meetings with relevant staff and spot checks of staff files and the SCR. They have increased the number of staff engaged to ensure that recruitment checks are undertaken in the right way and have rectified almost all previous deficiencies. Consequently, the procedures for checking the suitability of staff have improved significantly. However, shortcomings in checking those involved in teaching activity against the list of those prohibited from teaching and in recording the dates on which certain checks have been 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 the 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.

ISSR Part 8, 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.