

## **THETFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

Bridge Street, Thetford, Norfolk, IP2 3AF

**14 SEPTEMBER 2017**

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Thetford Grammar School is an independent co-educational day school situated in the centre of the town of Thetford, in Norfolk. The school has recently, in July 2017, become a limited company and during the visit was in the process of re-organising its governing board. The school has 194 pupils on roll, 108 boys and 86 girls, aged from 3 to 18 years. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is situated within the preparatory department of the junior school. The junior school has 10 children in the EYFS and 31 pupils in Years 1-6. The senior school has 122 pupils in Years 7 to 11 and 31 in the sixth form. The school has identified 48 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and provides specialist learning support to 20 pupils. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs, 3 pupils have an educational, health and care plan and there are no pupils who receive specialist support for English as an additional language.

### **PURPOSE OF THE VISIT**

This was an unannounced visit carried out at the request of the DfE to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the regulatory compliance inspection of 15 to 16 March 2017. The focus of the visit was on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, particularly those concerned with staff recruitment; risk assessment; Schedule 10 of the Equality Act; the recording of staff checks; the of quality leadership and management.

### **INSPECTION FINDINGS**

#### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and (b); EYFS 3.4]; Provision of information to parents [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32 (1) (c)]**

The school meets the regulations and requirements.

The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. 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 and are provided to parents on request.

Safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively to ensure the welfare of pupils, including for children in the EYFS. Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding receive training at the appropriate level, including working with other safeguarding agencies. All staff receive regular training in safeguarding and their responsibility in promoting the welfare of pupils, in line with the requirements of the local safeguarding children board, including training in promoting the pupils' e-safety and in the prevention of extremism. Staff new to the school receive appropriate induction training, including those staff who start work at times other than the start of term. All staff are required to read *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Part 1 and Annexe A*; their understanding

of what they have read is checked via discussions and by accessing on-line training. Training records kept by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) confirm the training undertaken by staff and that they have read *KCSIE Part 1 and Annexe A*.

The school liaises closely with the local safeguarding board and follows the advice they receive. Should concerns or allegations arise, the school is quick to seek advice from the appropriate agencies and, when necessary, make a referral. The school is aware of the need to liaise appropriately with parents about safeguarding concerns that arise to ensure that parental wishes do not override the best interests of the child.

Staff have a clear understanding of the school's code of conduct, including the use of mobile phones, guidance on taking images of children involved in school activities, and their use of social media. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe on the internet.

All the required checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of staff and other adults to work with children.

The school's safeguarding arrangements are overseen effectively by the governors. The designated governor for safeguarding meets regularly with the head and DSL to review arrangements and any child protection concerns. In addition, they carry out an annual review of the school's safeguarding policy and practice which, in turn, is reviewed annually by the full governing body.

#### **Welfare, health and safety - risk assessment [ISSR Part 3 paragraph 16 (a) and (b)]**

The school meets the regulation.

Since the previous inspection there has been a complete review of the school's health and safety procedures, including the risk assessment policy. The governors have sought external advice from health and safety professionals to produce a new written risk assessment policy which details the procedures in sufficient detail to cover foreseeable welfare issues relevant to the school, including early years. Senior leaders and governors conduct site walks to assess potential health and safety risks and they review all risk assessments before they are signed off. During the visit, staff were able to describe in detail the risk assessment procedure to manage a whole school off-site activity, due to take place the day after our visit. Additionally, a local site management policy is in place to allow pupils of all ages to cross a main road safely, in order to access both sites of the school.

#### **Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010**

The school meets requirements.

A new and detailed accessibility plan is now in place which covers a 3-year period, addressing the areas required, to promote disabled pupils; access to the curriculum, access to written information and to enable pupils to take advantage of the educational services offered by the school. The plan was produced after consultation between senior staff, the special needs department, heads of department and a governing board member. In addition, useful external advice was sought from a disability agency and, as a result, a robust accessibility plan is now in place.

#### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 (2) (d) and (3); 21]**

The school meets the regulations.

The school has rectified the omissions in undertaking the required recruitment checks, including those of the barred list. All checks are now correctly undertaken before staff take up their appointment. All the required checks are now recorded appropriately in the single central register. The school has revised its safer recruitment policy to include the need for these checks to be made on all staff, including visiting staff and volunteers. In order to ensure on-going compliance, the governors together with the senior management team now conduct half termly checks on the recruiting process, including entries made in the single central register.

**Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (1) (a) and (b)]**

The school meets the regulation.

Since the previous inspection the school's leadership and management have taken steps to ensure that they have the good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and effectively fulfil their responsibilities.

Staff and governors have undertaken training to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities, including ensuring staff pre-appointment checks are suitably carried out and recorded. The single central register has been completely reconstructed and summary record sheets of the necessary recruiting checks are kept in every personnel file, so there is an early indication of any omissions.

Leadership and management now regularly monitor all risk assessments and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Monitoring undertaken is then reported on, in the termly meetings of the governing board, where safeguarding, including staff pre-appointment checks, is now a standing agenda item. As a result of this increased effort in monitoring and review the school is now in a stronger position to ensure that the Independent School Standards are consistently met.

**REGULATORY ACTION POINTS**

The school meets all of the relevant requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.