



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

Thetford Grammar School

December 2019



School's details

School	Thetford Grammar School			
DfE number	926/6128			
Address	Thetford Grammar School Bridge Street Thetford Norfolk 1P2 3AF			
Telephone number	01842 752840			
Email address	scsec@thetgram.norfolk.sch.uk			
Head	Mr Michael Brewer			
Proprietor	Thetford Grammar School Ltd.			
Age range	3 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	204			
	Day pupils	191	Boarders	13
	EYFS	12	Juniors	27
	Seniors	122	Sixth Form	43
Date of visit	12 December 2019			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Thetford Grammar School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between three and eighteen years. Founded in the 10th Century, it was a state-funded grammar school for much of the 20th century. The school became independent in 1981 and in July 2017 it became a limited company owned and managed by Thetford Grammar School Ltd. The proprietor is supported by an advisory board of governors. Since the previous inspection in June 2019, the school has received approval to admit boarders and has opened a boarding house near to the school.
- 1.2 The school has identified 56 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) including dyslexia and developmental co-ordination disorder. A total of 26 of these pupils receive additional specialist help and eight have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Twenty-five pupils have English as an additional language. Their needs are supported in class and through individual and group support.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.3 This was an unannounced progress monitoring visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has implemented fully the action plan submitted following the education quality inspection in June 2019. The DfE also asked for additional aspects to be included.
- 1.4 The visit focused on the school's compliance with the standards relating to the quality of education; welfare, health and safety of pupils, including safeguarding arrangements, behaviour, bullying, supervision and fire; the suitability of staff; provision of information; complaints and quality of leadership and management.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraph 2 (quality of education provided – curriculum); EYFS 1.5 and 1.6	Met
Part 1, paragraph 3 (quality of education provided – teaching)	Met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (SMSC))	Met
Part 3, paragraph 7 and 8 (welfare, health and safety of pupils - safeguarding); NMS 2 and 11; EYFS 3.4, 3.5 and 3.7	Met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour); NMS 12; EYFS 3.52 and 3.53	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying); NMS 12	Met
Part 3; paragraph 12 (welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety); NMS 7; EYFS 3.54 and 3.55	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (Welfare, health and safety of pupils –	Met

supervision); NMS 15; EYFS 3.28	
Part 4, paragraph 18 to 21 (suitability of staff); NMS 14; EYFS 3.9, 3.11 and 3.12	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32 (1) (c) (provision of Information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (manner in which complaints are to be handled); NMS 18; EYFS 3.74 and 3.75	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (quality of leadership in and management of schools); NMS 13	Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2 (h); EYFS 1.5 and 1.6]

- 2.1 The school meets the standard and the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has a written policy on the curriculum supported by appropriate schemes of work that take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupil, including those pupils with an EHC plan. Pupils are provided with appropriate experiences in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Personal, social, health and economic education reflects the school's aims and ethos. Detailed individual education plans are provided for pupils with SEND. These are reviewed regularly, and parents are involved at an early stage in planning and supporting their children's special needs. All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.

Quality of education provided – teaching [ISSR Part 1 paragraph 3 (a), (d), (g), (h) and (j)]

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 Teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability. The aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of all pupils is taken into consideration, including those with SEND. There is a suitable framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and information from assessments is used to plan teaching so that all pupils can progress. Effective strategies are used for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly. Teaching meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Quality of education provided – SMSC [ISSR Part 2 paragraph 5 (b)(i)]

- 2.5 The school meets the standard.
- 2.6 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 2 and 11; EYFS 3.4, 3.5 and 3.7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.7 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.8 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

- 2.9 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.10 Those responsible for governance take seriously their responsibilities for safeguarding. A thorough annual review of safeguarding is in place with regular weekly monitoring of all safeguarding concerns and actions taken. Staff are aware of the latest statutory requirements and records indicate that pupils receive appropriate help with a focus on early intervention. Pupils feel safe at school and are confident that they have a member of staff to whom they can turn if they are worried or concerned. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy safeguarding leads are well-informed and appropriately trained. They know the pupils and families well and have robust recording and

monitoring systems in place. Advice is regularly sought from the local authority (LA) and referrals made without delay.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 12; EYFS 3.52 and 3.53]

- 2.11 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.12 The school has a clear and detailed behaviour policy. Behaviour observed in lessons and elsewhere was exemplary overall. Appropriate sanctions are in place and are used promptly and fairly if behaviour falls short of expectations, including appropriate allowances for SEND pupils. Pupils state strongly that rewards and sanctions are issued fairly by staff. Staff know the pupils well and together with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) make reasonable adjustments for pupils with additional needs. There is an ethos of listening to pupils with an effective restorative approach to behaviour management. A detailed record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10; NMS 12]

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 Staff and pupils are aware of the different types of bullying including on-line bullying. The school keeps detailed records of any bullying incidents. These are monitored on a daily basis by the DSL and weekly by senior leadership and governance, ensuring that appropriate allowances are made for SEND pupils. Swift action is taken to tackle any bullying including the early involvement of parents. Support and monitoring, particularly from form tutors, is put in place for both the bully and the victim. The school is aware of potential links between bullying and peer-on-peer abuse and makes effective use of advice from the LA. Pupils refer to personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and assemblies that enable them to understand bullying and what actions to take. They state strongly that bullying must not be permitted and that it is important to inform a teacher or trusted adult if they witness any bullying or unkindness.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 7; EYFS 3.54 and 3.55]

- 2.15 The school meets the standards and requirements.
- 2.16 The school has produced a comprehensive fire risk assessment document which covers all school buildings. This has been done in consultation with external professional contractors who were suitably qualified to do so. Fire risk control and monitoring has taken a higher priority since January 2019 and the documents seen indicated a robust approach to the control of fire prevention and monitoring so that the school meets the appropriate requirements.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 15; EYFS 3.28]

- 2.17 The school meets the standard and the requirements.
- 2.18 The school has appropriate duty rotas in place which are monitored by senior leadership. Pupils were observed interacting positively during break times. Older pupils were mindful of the needs of younger ones. Staff observed pupils diligently and were quick to listen if a pupil requested some advice or support. There is an effective emergency card system in place should staff require additional support.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 -21; NMS 14.1; EYFS 3.9, 3.11 and 3.12]

- 2.19 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.20 A number of new staff have been employed since the previous inspection. The required checks including obtaining references, checks against the barred list of those prohibited from teaching were carried out prior to appointment and recorded accurately on the single central register of appointments (SCR). Appropriate supporting documentation was maintained in staff files. The proprietor regularly monitors the SCR and staff files to ensure that the school continues to meet the regulation.

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

- 2.21 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; NMS 18; EYFS 3.74 and 3.75]

- 2.22 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.23 The school has an appropriate complaints policy which is available to parents through the school website along with information about the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. The process seeks to resolve any complaint informally in the first instance. If concerns are not resolved, the parents may proceed to make a formal complaint in writing. If the complaint remains unresolved, the school makes provision for a hearing before a panel which includes at least one person independent of the management and running of the school and which parents may attend, accompanied if they wish. The panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. A confidential record is kept of all complaints and findings, including action taken by the school whether or not the complaint was upheld. The school's records show that complaints are handled promptly and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the complaints policy.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (1) (a), (b) and (c); NMS 13]

- 2.24 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.25 Governance, leadership and management take seriously their responsibility to ensure that the school is compliant consistently. The proprietor has undergone recent intensive training with the DSL and on-line in order to be able to fulfil his responsibilities, particularly in terms of safeguarding and recruitment. Appropriate procedures for monitoring all aspects of compliance have been instigated with robust monitoring of the SCR and recruitment procedures. The proprietors ensure that the leadership and management of the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively and the well-being of pupils is actively promoted.

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, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 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 head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the proprietor. They visited different areas of the school, observed lessons and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.