



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

Woodcote House School

June 2023

School's details

School	Woodcote House School			
DfE number	936/6102			
Address	Woodcote House School Snow's Ride Windlesham Surrey GU20 6PF			
Telephone number	01276 472115			
Email address	info@woodcotehouseschool.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr David Paterson			
Chair of proprietors	Mr Nick Paterson			
Proprietor	Woodcote House School Limited			
Age range	7 to 14			
Number of pupils on roll	91			
	Day pupils	22	Full Boarders	35
			Flexi Boarders	34
	Juniors	46	Seniors	45
Date of inspection	20 June 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Woodcote House School is a day and boarding preparatory school for male pupils. It has occupied the same site since it was founded in 1816 and, since 1931, has been owned and managed by the same family. The current headmaster and his brothers are co-owners of the school. They are supported by an advisory board, chaired by a member of the proprietorial family. The school has 22 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. One pupil has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 21 pupils. The school's previous inspection was an educational quality inspection in November 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the education quality inspection of November 2022. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 19	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 8]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 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

- 2.3 The school meets the standards.
- 2.4 Scrutiny of records, observation and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that appropriate safeguards are implemented effectively to promote pupils' welfare, including in boarding. Those responsible for safeguarding hold senior positions within the school. Senior leaders and those with specific responsibilities to implement safeguarding arrangements are suitably knowledgeable and appropriately trained, including for multi-agency working. Safeguarding, pastoral, healthcare and boarding staff share key information regularly and effectively. They take into account each individual pupil's physical and psychological needs and wishes. This information is used to agree appropriate action including the drawing-up and implementation of individual support plans. There is effective liaison with external agencies including referral to child and adolescent health services (CAMHS) and the local authority designated officer (LADO) for safeguarding. Training for other staff and for proprietors is conducted regularly as required. It is effective and includes informal updates.
- 2.5 Staff are knowledgeable about changes in recent legislation including the management of children's mental wellbeing, contextual safeguarding, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence. They understand the principles underpinning the staff code of conduct and the procedures for making a referral, including the importance of low-level reporting. They are confident about using whistleblowing procedures. Interviews with staff confirmed that they have effective understanding of their training and that safeguarding is effectively managed. Senior leaders take appropriate action if any perceived breach of the staff code of conduct occurs. They understand their responsibility to make referral to relevant statutory bodies once investigations by external agencies are completed. They fulfil this effectively.
- 2.6 Pupils stated confidently that they receive a detailed induction when they start school including how to stay safe and who to talk to; how to contact helplines including Childline and the Children's Commissioner; online safety; and behavioural expectations. They can name a number of staff to whom they can turn if they are worried or concerned. Pupils know how to contact the school's independent listeners. Any concerns raised are monitored and acted upon by the DSL. Records confirm that when pupils raise a concern they receive a timely response and action is taken where needed.
- 2.7 The proprietor responsible for safeguarding meets regularly with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy. This maintains effective oversight of safeguarding policies and their implementation in the main school and the boarding houses. Reports are given regularly to the proprietorial board by the DSL. These highlight appropriate details of any safeguarding incidents which occur including during trips and outside of school. This ensures that proprietors have an appropriate level of understanding, scrutiny and oversight. In addition to continuous monitoring, a suitable annual review of safeguarding is undertaken.

- 2.8 The proprietors now ensure that recruitment processes meet statutory requirements. All required checks against the barred list; a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check; checks against the list of those prohibited from teaching and/or management; verification of employment history; and receipt and verification of references are completed before staff start work. Staff files contain clear evidence to confirm recruitment checks carried out on staff and proprietors.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 19]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 There is a suitable recruitment policy in place which covers the required recruitment checks and procedures, and which is implemented effectively. All staff, proprietors and persons engaged in regulated activity, including in boarding, are checked. Such checks are now recorded appropriately on the single central register of appointments (SCR), including the date on which each check was completed. This ensures that the SCR is an accurate record of staff appointments. Senior leaders and human resources staff received training on carrying out required recruitment checks in February 2023. Those responsible for carrying out the required recruitment checks ensure that all such checks are completed prior to commencing work in the school. Appropriate procedures are in place for managing contractors including ensuring that they are accompanied at all times if not checked by the school. Visits to boarding areas are suitably regulated.

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

- 2.11 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.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]

- 2.12 The school meets the standards.
- 2.13 Senior leaders and proprietors, including those with specific responsibilities for safeguarding and boarding, have undertaken the training necessary to ensure a good understanding of the regulatory requirements. This enables them to demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. The school has fully and effectively implemented the action plan required following the previous inspection.

3. Summary of evidence

- 3.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a group of proprietors. He visited different areas of the school, observed lessons and talked with groups of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mr Desmond Dunne

Reporting inspector