



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

St Ambrose Preparatory School

October 2019



School's details

School	St Ambrose Preparatory School			
DfE number	358/6004			
Registered charity number	254312			
Address	St Ambrose Preparatory School Wicker Lane Hale Barns Altrincham Cheshire WA15 0HF			
Telephone number	0161 903 9133			
Email address	secretary@stambroseprep.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Francis Driscoll			
Proprietor	The Congregation of Christian Brothers			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	105			
	EYFS	18	Juniors	87
Date of visit	3 October 2019			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 St Ambrose Preparatory School is an independent Roman Catholic school for pupils aged between three and eleven years. It is registered as a single-sex school for male pupils. Once part of St Ambrose College, it is now an independent establishment. The school is administered by the Congregation of Christian Brothers, who are its trustees, supported by a local governing body. It consists of: an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) department, comprising Nursery and Reception classes; an infant department, for pupils aged from five to seven; and a junior department, for those aged from seven to eleven. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is three, all of whom receive additional support. No pupil has an education, health and care plan. Eleven pupils have English as an additional language and their needs are supported by their classroom teachers.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the focused compliance and educational quality inspection on 5 to 7 March 2019.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b); EYFS 3.9 (safeguarding)	Remain not met
Part 3, paragraph 15 (admissions)	Met
Part 4 paragraph 18 (appointment of staff)	Met
Part 4 paragraph 21 (the single central register of appointments)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32 (1) (c) (provision of information – safeguarding policy)	Met
Part 7 paragraph 33 (complaints)	Met
Part 8 paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Remains not met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and (b); EYFS 3.9]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirement.
- 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. The policy has been updated in September 2019 to take account of recent updates in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school does not meet the standard and the requirements.
- 2.4 The implementation of the school's safeguarding policy is effective in most areas, ensuring that pupils are generally safe and well supported by staff. There is a satisfactory policy outlining the procedure for recruiting staff. The school now ensures that checks of the barred list and, where appropriate, those for prohibition from teaching are carried out on staff before they start work. However, during the visit the school was not able to demonstrate, through written confirmation, that it had acquired evidence of employment history and suitable references for all staff appointed. For a member of staff employed by another establishment, but paid by the school to coach its pupils, the school was unable to provide written evidence of references or of checks of previous employment history. There was no written confirmation that these checks had been carried out other than a note that verbal references had been received from two staff from the other establishment, without any written records of the conversations which formed the basis of these references, although the dates of these checks are recorded in the single central register of appointments (SCR).
- 2.5 Staff show effective understanding of their responsibilities and are well trained and regularly updated on developments in safeguarding procedures. Records show that all staff have been trained appropriately. Staff show appropriate awareness of the staff code of conduct and safeguarding procedures. The safeguarding policy gives sufficient contact details for local agencies. Appropriate arrangements for handling allegations against staff are included in safeguarding procedures. Staff interviewed understood the procedures for reporting such allegations.
- 2.6 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy (DDSL) have updated their training with the local authority at the correct level. Confidential records of pupils at risk or in need of early help are kept appropriately and close links are maintained with external agencies. Pupils receive guidance about how to keep safe and show suitable understanding of what they have been taught, including in relation to e-safety. The school has an appropriate policy for the acceptable use of information and communication technology (ICT) and an effective filtering and monitoring system is implemented. The school carries out and records suitability checks on visiting speakers.
- 2.7 There is a designated safeguarding governor who has close and regular contact with the DSL and takes an active role in overseeing safeguarding in the school.

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

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.
- 2.9 The school has carried out all required pre-appointment checks required in this part, including barred list checks, those for identity, prohibition from teaching, right to work, overseas checks and qualifications on all appointments since the previous inspection and these are effectively recorded in the SCR.

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

- 2.10 The school meets the requirement.
- 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.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33]

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 The school has an effective complaints policy which is implemented effectively. It has appropriate time scales for responding to complaints. The school now holds a suitable written log which records the stage at which complaints are resolved and any action taken as a result of complaints, whether or not they were upheld. The log records that parents have been invited to take their complaint to a panel hearing by governors if dissatisfied with the response to a formal complaint, where formal complaints have been made. It also records that in some such cases parents have declined to do so and expressed satisfaction with the resolution of their complaint at the second stage of the school's procedure. No formal complaints have been received since the previous inspection.

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

- 2.14 The school does not meet the standard.
- 2.15 Members of the school leadership team have not always demonstrated good skills and knowledge in following the guidance in KCSIE fully with regard to recruitment checks. In addition, proprietors have not carried out their oversight responsibilities effectively to ensure that leaders and managers fulfil their responsibilities and actively promote the well-being of pupils.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraph 7

- Ensure that an employment history is obtained and references are recorded effectively for each member of staff before appointment; in particular, where verbal references are taken, that a detailed written record is kept of the conversation with the referee [paragraph 7 (a) and (b); EYFS 3.9].

ISSR Part 8, Leadership and Management, paragraph 34

- The proprietor must ensure effective oversight of safeguarding practice in the school so that leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively with regard to recruitment checks, and actively promote the well-being of pupils [paragraph 34 (1)(a) (b) and (c)].

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the safeguarding governor. They talked with groups of pupils and observed pupils in the playground at morning break. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.