



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Maidwell Hall School

October 2021

School's details

School	Maidwell Hall School			
DfE number	928/6005			
Registered charity number	309917			
Address	Maidwell Hall School Maidwell Northamptonshire NN6 9JG			
Telephone number	01604 686234			
Email address	theseecretary@maidwellhall.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Robert Lankester			
Chair of governors	Mr Crispin Holborrow			
Age range	4 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	137			
	Day pupils	56	Boarders	81
	EYFS	6	Juniors	73
	Seniors	58		
Date of visit	13 to 14 October 2021			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Maidwell Hall School is independent co-educational boarding and day school, set in the Northamptonshire countryside. The school is a registered charity, whose trustees form the governing body. A small number of boarders come from overseas. The school has identified 21 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, all of whom receive additional specialist help. There is one pupil with an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for ten pupils. The school's previous inspection was a material change visit in September 2020.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an unannounced additional inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraph 2(A) (quality of education provided - relationships and sex education)	Not met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils); NMS 17 and 19	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	Not met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour); NMS 12	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying): NMS 12	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 6	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 7	Met
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid); NMS 3	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 15	Met
Part 3, paragraph 15 (admission and attendance registers)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6	Met
Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32 (provision of information)	Not met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	Not met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – relationships and sex education [ISSR Part 1, Paragraph 2(A)]

- 2.1 The school does not meet the standard.
- 2.2 The prescribed curriculum content for relationships and sex education (RSE) is contained within the school's current Life skills scheme of work. Pupils in Year 6 and below receive appropriate teaching in relationships education and RSE is taught to senior-age pupils by specialists. Many appropriate topics based around sex education are included within the scheme, but currently there is insufficient time allocated to the delivery of these topics. In discussions, senior pupils did not exhibit an effective understanding of sex education.
- 2.3 Parents at the school have not yet been consulted regarding their views on the content of the school's RSE programme of study and a written statement for RSE is not published on the school's website.
- 2.4 In their responses to questionnaires, a majority of the senior pupils who responded did not agree that sufficient time is spent on RSE and these views were confirmed in pupil discussions.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5: NMS 17 and 19]

- 2.5 The school meets the standards.
- 2.6 Scrutiny of the school's documentation confirms that principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. In discussions pupils spoke about adults and their peers in a respectful manner which confirmed the appropriate nature of relationships within the school. They also showed a suitable acceptance for the views and beliefs of others, both within the school community and the wider world. Pupils demonstrate appropriate regard for those with protected characteristics.
- 2.7 Responsibility within boarding is encouraged through the regular meetings at which boarders can raise views. Suitably trained prefects and dormitory captains act as role models for younger boarders, encouraging respect and harmony within the boarding community

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.8 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.11 The content of the school's safeguarding policy is supported by additional policies, such as the code of conduct for staff, whistle-blowing procedures and procedures for the safer recruitment of staff. Not all elements of these policies are implemented effectively.
- 2.12 Additional arrangements to ensure the welfare of the pupils during the COVID-19 pandemic have been continually updated in line with government advice.
- 2.13 In discussions, pupils report that they feel they are listened to by staff and that there are many opportunities to raise any concerns both in school and during periods of remote learning. Inspection

evidence confirms this view and that action is taken when pupils' specific needs are identified. Records of safeguarding show that the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy (DDSL) work closely together to ensure that safeguarding information is regularly shared and procedures monitored. The DSL consults appropriately with other agencies when necessary, with regard to pupils' welfare, including local safeguarding partners and the police, if pupils are respectively in need or at risk, including any who are victims of harmful sexual behaviour or potentially so. In the questionnaires, a few pupils commented that there was some favouritism by members of staff. This was not confirmed by pupils in discussions and inspectors could find no evidence to support this view.

- 2.14 The school safeguarding team works together with the designated governor to produce an annual safeguarding report, which is then discussed appropriately at a full governors' meeting. Members of the board receive appropriate safeguarding training, including identifying and responding to sexual harassment, sexual violence and peer-on-peer sexual abuse. The DSL ensures that they receive regular safeguarding updates.
- 2.15 Detailed school records of all safeguarding concerns are regularly monitored to identify patterns so that any early signs of abuse can be acted upon. These records confirm evidence from interviews that there have been no incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence, including online. Regular safeguarding training for all staff includes identification of such behaviours and in discussions staff demonstrated a full awareness of their training and their safeguarding responsibilities and confirmed that they would know how to respond if a situation of peer-on-peer sexual abuse arose. Staff receive suitable training when new to the school and subsequently update training about the most recent statutory guidance is regularly provided. Staff have completed training in the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Central records of staff attendance at training are kept systematically, so that absentees at the time of training can be identified.
- 2.16 Arrangements for handling allegations against staff are included in safeguarding procedures. However, these have not always been followed correctly meaning, that the school has not fulfilled the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE). Correct referral has not been made to relevant external agencies when concerns have been identified about an adult working in the school.
- 2.17 Leaders and governors are unclear about their responsibility for reporting any person, whose services are no longer to be used, to the appropriate statutory bodies such as the Disclosure and Barring Service and/or the Teaching Regulation Agency, where referral criteria are met. The oversight of safeguarding by governors is therefore inadequate.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 12] and bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10; NMS 12]

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 The school's approach to behaviour management is effective, as evidenced through the scrutiny of systematic records and direct observation of pupils' behaviour around the school. It reinforces a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated. Suitable sanctions are available for use should any such behaviour occur. Pupils are courteous, conducting themselves in a responsible manner. In discussions they reported that there is a culture of kindness throughout the school where harassment and abuse are not tolerated.
- 2.20 Effective measures are in place to guard against bullying both in day and boarding time. The school policy includes comprehensive definitions of bullying and is supported by separate anti-cyber-bullying procedures. The policy provides for educating pupils about bullying through assemblies and life skills lessons. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire confirmed that the school recognises and deals effectively with all types of bullying. As with other incidents of poor behaviour, central recording is effective and records shows that suitable steps are taken to deal with any bullying that occurs.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 6] and fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 7]

- 2.21 The school meets the standards.
- 2.22 The school implements an appropriate health and safety policy effectively and health and safety matters within the school are appropriately handled, including control of hazardous substances. School leaders monitor the effectiveness of their procedures. No health and safety issues were evident during a tour of the school and boarding accommodation. A suitable fire risk assessment for the school buildings has recently been undertaken. Any recommended actions of such an assessment are acted upon. Fire signage is clear throughout and there are sufficient members of staff available to manage any emergency evacuation. Records of fire drills actioned in both day and boarding hours are appropriately maintained and monitored and fire equipment is tested and serviced regularly.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – first aid [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13; NMS 3]

- 2.23 The school meets the standards.
- 2.24 The school has a suitable policy for first aid which is implemented effectively. The school ensures that first aid is always administered in a timely and competent manner and that medical records are detailed. There are adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff and suitable provision of first-aid equipment, for off-site activities as well as in the school itself. Procedures for boarders include the identification and treatment of those with specific chronic medical conditions and effective arrangements for the overnight care of boarders who are unwell.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 15] risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 6]

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.
- 2.26 Pupils are properly supervised within lessons, as they move around the school and at break and lunchtimes. Published duty rotas ensure that an appropriate number of suitably qualified staff take responsibility for both day pupils and boarders during their after-school activities. The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy which sets out a suitable approach to the management of risk, including for matters relating to COVID-19. Systematic risk assessments are in place for a range of activities that identify and control risks across teaching areas, including in science and other hazardous areas, in the school grounds and in boarding accommodation. Risk assessments for offsite visits organised by the school are appropriate and include suitable arrangements for supervision.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – admission and attendance registers [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15] and Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan)

- 2.27 The school meets the standard and requirement.
- 2.28 The proprietor ensures that admission and attendance registers are maintained appropriately. The school operates effective systems to store the information. The school has an appropriate accessibility plan which sets out targets within a suitable time scale to increase the extent to which the school's curriculum is made accessible to all pupils.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32]

- 2.29 The school does not meet the requirements.
- 2.30 At the time of the visit the school was unable to supply inspectors with a copy of its policy for RSE which was in a state ready for publication. Furthermore, the school did not provide all information which was reasonably requested for the purposes of the inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act, namely information requested regarding staff disciplinary actions.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 13]

- 2.31 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.32 Senior leaders and governors do not demonstrate the necessary skills to ensure that all regulations are met, in particular with regard to safeguarding and provision for RSE, including the publication of a suitable policy. They do not actively promote the well-being of pupils, including boarders.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 The school does not meet 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 should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 1, Quality of Education - relationships and sex education, paragraph 2A

- The school must ensure that every pupil in Years 7 and 8 is provided with effective relationships and sex education, except in so far as a pupil is excused as provided for in the regulations [paragraph 2A(1)(b) and (2)].
- The school must consult with parents to develop a relationships and sex education policy which also takes into account the views of staff and pupils [paragraph 2A(1)(f)].
- The school must make, keep up to date and publish on its website a separate written statement of its policy provision for RSE which meets the requirements of statutory guidance [paragraph 2A(1)(d), (e) and (g)].

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11

- The school must ensure that allegations about members of staff are handled in line with KCSIE and that sufficient consideration is given to making a referral to the appropriate bodies if the school ceases to use a person's services [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), and 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4, 3.7 and 3.13].
- The school must ensure that oversight and management of safeguarding by governors is sufficient to ensure that all requirements of KCSIE are met [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), and 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7].

ISSR Part 6, Provision of information, paragraph 32

- The school must provide all documentation which is reasonably requested in connection with an inspection [paragraph 32(1)(g)].

ISSR Part 8, Leadership and management, paragraph 34; NMS 13

- The school must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities use their skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively to promote the well-being of pupils and to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met [paragraph 34(1)(a)(b) and (c); NMS 13.1 and 13.3-13.5].

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders, other members of staff and with the chair of governors. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.