



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Warminster School

December 2021

School's details

School	Warminster School			
DfE number	865/6009			
Registered charity number	1042204			
Address	Warminster School Church Street Warminster Wiltshire BA12 8PJ			
Telephone number	01985 210101			
Email address	reception@warminsterschool.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Matt Williams			
Chair of governors	Mr Ian McComas			
Age range	2 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	553			
	Day pupils	422	Boarders	131
	EYFS	39	Juniors	87
	Seniors	315	Sixth Form	112
Date of visit	8 to 9 December 2021			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Warminster School is an independent, co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between two and nineteen years. Founded in 1707, the school has charitable status and is overseen by a board of governors. The school comprises a nursery, pre-prep, prep school and senior school on adjoining sites. There are four boarding houses providing co-educational accommodation for pupils up to Year 8, separate accommodation for Years 9 to 11 and co-educational accommodation for pupils in the sixth form, on both a flexible and full-time basis. The school has 195 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 8 have an education, health and care plan. 72 pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a focussed compliance with educational quality in February 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), and 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 2A (relationships and sex education)	Met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) and NMS 17 and 19	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	Met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour) and NMS 12	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying) and NMS 12	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 15	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment) and NMS 6	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (publication of safeguarding policy)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management) and NMS 13	Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2A]

- 2.1 The school meets the standard.
- 2.2 The school has successfully implemented the relationships and health education (RHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum across the age range of the school. The policy has been developed and introduced in consultation with parents, pupils and staff. The policy is made available for parents on the school website and makes clear under what circumstances parents may choose to withdraw their children from specific elements of the curriculum. The curriculum meets the requirements of the published guidance. In the junior school the RSE curriculum is covered in weekly PSHE lessons and in the senior school through a programme of life skills days across the year supplemented by a programme of external specialist speakers. The provision has been reviewed in response to feedback from pupils. It now includes regular weekly sessions with form tutors following the life skills days to give time for questions and reflection on key elements of the work covered. Pupils' understanding is checked through a series of assessments to ensure that any gaps in knowledge can be identified and addressed.

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

- 2.3 The school meets the standards.
- 2.4 The ethos of the school and the range of activities built in across the range of the curriculum ensures that all pupils receive suitable guidance to support their spiritual, moral and social development. There is active promotion of British values throughout the school, encouraging respect, tolerance and empathy towards the needs of others, including those with protected characteristics. This was evident in the open and positive discussions seen in interviews, between pupils and between staff and pupils. Older pupils have the confidence to take the initiative and prepare and deliver presentations to raise awareness for younger pupils on issues current in society as a whole such as the use of inappropriate language, sexual harassment, racism and homophobia. An appropriate programme of external speakers has addressed issues highlighted by Everyone's Invited and pupils who have left the school have spoken to older pupils in order to highlight key points. During discussions, pupils understood that rules are necessary to ensure equality and fairness within society. Pupils demonstrate effective understanding of differing cultures and the needs of a diverse world developed through a wide range of appropriate activities made available. Pupils develop age-appropriate democratic knowledge through classroom discussions and school council membership elections.

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.5 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.6 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

- 2.7 The school meets the standards.
- 2.8 Safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively in line with current statutory guidance across all sections of the school. Records demonstrate that the school provides appropriate support for

pupils' needs, including listening to children, giving a response and taking appropriate action when concerns are raised. All staff have recently received suitable training on the most recent changes to statutory guidance and online safety effective from September 2021. New staff complete a comprehensive induction process to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities, including details of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Part 1 and Annex B, the staff code of conduct, whistleblowing procedures, procedures for children missing education and the school's behaviour policy. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies have sufficient status and authority to undertake their roles, and have appropriate levels of training, which is in line with local procedures. The DSL provides regular informal updates to staff including for the identification and management of peer on peer abuse, sexual abuse or harassment, including that happening online.

- 2.9 Staff have a full understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They recognise the importance of 'early help' strategies, know how to report any concerns about pupils or other staff to the DSL, and do so appropriately. They understand the varied types of pupil-on-pupil abuse including sexual abuse and harassment, and the seriousness of such behaviours. A suitable programme of training for staff has ensured that such incidents are dealt with appropriately. The school is fully aware of the range of support available to children and young people who are victims or who perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour. Although a small minority of pupils, in response to questionnaires, disagreed that the school does not tolerate unwanted sexual behaviour or name calling, records demonstrate that there is an appropriate response made and support provided for all pupils concerned in such incidents. This includes provision of detailed risk assessments written with input from all those involved. The safeguarding policy and procedure is reviewed effectively after any such incidents to aim to prevent repetition. Staff understand how to report any concerns about senior leaders.
- 2.10 Appropriately detailed records for safeguarding concerns, including for incidences of sexual harassment and violence including online, are maintained. These records are regularly monitored by the DSL and DDSs to identify patterns to ensure that a process of early intervention can be put in place. These show timely and appropriate liaison with both parents and local agencies. Referrals are made in the correct time frame and action taken meets the expectation of the local multi-agency arrangements. The governing board undertakes a regular safeguarding review with due diligence, including review of incidents, demonstrating appropriate oversight of safeguarding arrangements. Suitable recruitment procedures are provided for. Pupils, during discussions, commented that they are aware of safeguarding arrangements in school, including for on-line safety and are confident that their concerns will be addressed.

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

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 The school has a suitable behaviour policy which is available on the school website. It has recently been updated to include a positive approach to behaviour management including the use of a restorative justice process. It sets out the aims of the school and outlines the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour including for incidences of sexual harassment and inappropriate online behaviour. Staff and pupils understand the policy ensuring that it is implemented effectively. Detail of incidents is recorded on a system of dedicated software and monitored regularly by senior staff to identify patterns and action to be taken. A record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour which takes into account the specific needs of individual pupils including those with SEND. The school implements its exclusion policy fairly and appropriately.

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

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 The school has a suitable policy for bullying which sets out clearly the measures the school takes to prevent bullying in the first instance and to deal with it, should it occur. This is implemented effectively. Staff and pupils fully understand their responsibility for reporting any instances of bullying, and records show that this happens in practice. Resolution of bullying incidents involves discussion with both perpetrator and victim, and parents of all parties are involved at an early stage and kept informed.
- 2.15 The school is fully aware that such incidents may become safeguarding issues and may necessitate the involvement of the police or the local authority children's services. Those with designated responsibilities understand the thresholds for such referrals. All bullying instances are recorded in appropriate detail, using dedicated software. Records indicate that bullying incidents including those related to race and gender do occur within the school but that they are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

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

- 2.16 The school meets the standards.
- 2.17 The school has appropriate arrangements for the supervision of pupils within lessons, as they move around the school, at breaks and lunchtimes and before and after school. There are sufficient staff to supervise boarders.
- 2.18 In light of pupil feedback through a recent pupil questionnaire, the routes taken by duty staff during breaktimes have been reviewed to ensure that the routines work as effectively as possible.

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

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 The school has an appropriate policy for risk assessment and ensures that risk assessments are drawn up for areas of the school and specific activities which might pose a risk to pupils. It also completes appropriately detailed welfare risk assessments for pupils with additional social and emotional needs, including the victim or perpetrator of any incident of inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

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

- 2.21 The school meets the standard.
- 2.22 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 1 and 13]

- 2.23 The school meets the standards.
- 2.24 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently. The school has ensured that it has taken effective action in light of the publication of national guidance documents relating to sexual abuse and harassment. Leaders have actively listened to pupil views and reviewed a number of structures and systems within the school to take these views into account.

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 a governor. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.