



Material Change Inspection Report

Hill House School

June 2024

School's details

School	Hill House School			
DfE number	371/6000			
Registered charity number	529420			
Address	Hill House School 6 th Avenue Auckley Doncaster South Yorkshire DN9 3GG			
Telephone number	01302 776 300			
Email address	info@hillhouse.doncaster.sch.uk			
Headmaster	Mr David Holland			
Chair of governors	Mrs Joan Fearn			
Proprietor	Hill House School Ltd			
Age Range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	875			
	EYFS	107	Juniors	265
	Seniors	377	Sixth Form	126
Date of inspection	11 June 2024			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Hill House School is a co-educational independent day school for pupils. The school is managed by a charitable trust run by a board of governors. The school comprises a nursery provision, including an early years setting, junior and senior sections, and a sixth form. The school has 14 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, of whom two have an education, health and care plan. English is spoken as an additional language by 77 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance and educational quality inspection in September 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase the maximum number of pupils to 1140. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 - 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints procedure)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

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 standard.
- 2.4 Implementation of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support for pupils' needs.
- 2.5 Safeguarding procedures are implemented to safeguard children at risk and those in need. Staff show effective understanding of their responsibilities, including in those areas which are the focus of most recent changes in safeguarding guidance, in particular in the procedures to monitor and filter the use of the internet. Suitable recruitment procedures for staff are included within the safeguarding policy. These are expanded on in a separate recruitment procedures document which requires appropriate checks against the barred list. Staff show appropriate awareness of the staff code of conduct and safeguarding procedures. They use the school's low-level concerns procedures appropriately. In interviews, staff showed effective understanding of the training they have received in these areas, including the most recent training which reflected the new elements in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) 2023. They are aware of who to go to if they have a concern or receive a disclosure and also that they can make a referral to children's services if necessary.
- 2.6 The safeguarding policy includes suitable definitions of abuse. It provides appropriate guidance regarding possible abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil, including linking such abuse to bullying. Suitable risk assessment procedures are provided for determining where immediate action is required in such cases, including referral to local agencies. The school has an effective understanding of the local guidance on reporting child-on-child abuse. Discussion with safeguarding leaders for the school confirmed that pupils receive help to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Leaders act on and refer the early signs of risk or need, monitor any potential for radicalisation, and ensure the school listens to the views of individual pupils as required by KCSIE. This is confirmed in written evidence from suitable records. Such records are kept confidential.
- 2.7 Staff with particular responsibilities monitor children in need effectively. Effective communication is maintained with parents where appropriate. Staff are clear that they cannot promise confidentiality if a parent makes a disclosure which requires action to be taken by the safeguarding team or external agencies. Pupils receive guidance on staying safe and show understanding of what they have been taught, including in relation to e-safety. They confirm that the school takes actions when they express concerns.
- 2.8 The safeguarding policy gives contact details as required for local agencies. Suitable arrangements for handling allegations against staff are included in safeguarding procedures; they include seeking immediate advice from the local authority designated safeguarding officers (LADO). The school understands its role in reporting any person whose services are no longer used where referral criteria are met to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and/or the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA). Alternative persons of appropriate status are provided in the absence of the safeguarding lead.

- 2.9 Annual review of safeguarding is appropriate with the most recent review of policy undertaken in September 2023. There is regular contact between those with safeguarding responsibilities and a nominated governor to liaise regarding safeguarding. When incidents linked to safeguarding occur, they are communicated to governors through regular reports. The school keeps a separate record of safeguarding issues related to any inappropriate racial or sexual behaviour and takes suitable action.
- 2.10 Leaders have identified any safeguarding risks to pupils related to the construction of the new building. Visitors to the site are appropriately checked.
- 2.11 The training for the safeguarding team is appropriate. Training is held in the school for teaching and non-teaching staff, including minibus drivers. Training is of sufficient quality and scope and staff understanding is checked appropriately. Central records of staff attendance at training are kept systematically and these enable any staff who miss training to receive appropriate alternative guidance.
- 2.12 The size of the safeguarding team has been increased in readiness for the envisaged increase in pupil numbers. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of pupils.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11]

- 2.13 The school meets the standard.
- 2.14 The proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy. Records show that testing of electrical, water and other utilities is regularly undertaken. Staff are trained effectively in health and safety. They deal promptly and appropriately with accidents if they occur, including through the reporting of serious accidents. Systematic record keeping ensures that trends are identified and steps taken to mitigate recurrence of any health and safety issues. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12]

- 2.15 The school meets the standard.
- 2.16 The school has a fire risk (prevention) policy which includes the elimination or reduction of risks from dangerous substances. A fire risk assessment of all buildings has been undertaken by a suitably qualified person. Fire procedures are understood by, and appropriate training provided for, staff and pupils. Termly fire drills are carried out and recorded. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.17 The school meets the standard.
- 2.18 Pupils are properly supervised by qualified and trained staff. Supervision arrangements are amended appropriately when the regular evaluation of risks to pupils shows this to be necessary. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.19 The school meets the standard.
- 2.20 Governors and school leaders have drawn up a suitable, strategic risk plan to identify and mitigate any risk to pupils' wellbeing as a consequence of the increase in school numbers. The risk assessment

policy clearly describes the lines of responsibility and the approaches to be taken to identify and mitigate risk. There are appropriate assessments of risk for in-school activities, school visits, and for the needs of individual pupils both while in school and in the surrounding area. Appropriate action is taken to mitigate risks identified. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.21 The school meets the standards.
- 2.22 All the required checks on staff and governors are carried out and completed before they take up their posts. The school does not employ supply staff. Contractors send the school up-to-date information on checks they have undertaken on their employees, and the school makes appropriate further checks on arrival.
- 2.23 The school maintains correctly an accurate single central register of appointments which includes the dates on which all checks have been completed.
- 2.24 The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23-29]

- 2.25 The school meets the standard.
- 2.26 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. The new building will allow further rationalisation and expansion of teaching and recreational facilities. Suitable outdoor space both on and off site is provided for physical education and outdoor play. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.27 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]

- 2.28 The school meets the standard.
- 2.29 The school has an appropriate complaints policy which is made available to parents of current and prospective pupils from the website or on application to the school. The policy is implemented effectively and the timescales indicated for each stage of a complaint are observed. The log of formal complaints is effective, showing timescales. Appropriate records are kept of the actions taken by the school, whether a complaint is upheld or not. Informal complaints are handled appropriately. The logs are kept confidential except as regulations require.

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

- 2.30 The school meets the standard.

- 2.31 Appropriate procedures are implemented which allow senior leaders and governors to manage safeguarding and welfare arrangements and monitor compliance with regulations, including those concerned with staff recruitment and handling parents' complaints. Governors regularly review policies and the manner in which they are implemented, as do senior leaders. Evidence shows that senior leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that the application to increase pupil numbers to 1140 be approved.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a group of governors. He visited different areas of the school, the site of the new building and talked with groups of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.