



**Material Change Inspection Report**

**Lorenden Preparatory School**

**January 2024**

## School's details

<b>School</b>	Lorenden Preparatory School			
<b>DfE number</b>	886/6064			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1142794			
<b>Address</b>	Lorenden Preparatory School Painter's Forstal Faversham Kent ME13 0EN			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 590030			
<b>Email address</b>	office@lorenden.org			
<b>Head</b>	Mr Richard McIntosh			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Philip Harland			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST)			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	112			
	<b>EYFS</b>	29	<b>Pre-prep</b>	27
	<b>Prep</b>	56		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	11 January 2024			

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Lorenden Preparatory School is a co-educational day school. It is located in a rural setting near Faversham in Kent. The school became part of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST) in 2015 and merged its charitable status with that of the trust in 2022. The school's governing body operates under authority devolved directly from the MIST trustees.
- 1.2 The school is organised into: the early years for children aged three to five years; the pre-prep for pupils aged five to seven years; and the prep for pupils aged seven to eleven years. The school has sixteen pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. One pupil has an education, health and care plan. Sixteen pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in June 2023.

### Purpose of the inspection

- 1.3 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase its maximum number of pupils from 120 to 140. 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)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	<b>Met</b>
Part 4, paragraphs 18 - 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	<b>Met</b>
Part 5, paragraphs 23 - 29 (premises and accommodation)	<b>Met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (quality of leadership and management)	<b>Met</b>

## 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 The school implements its safeguarding arrangements effectively in accordance with its policy and current statutory guidance. This gives staff clear guidance on types and signs of abuse, listening to pupils and how to record and report concerns.
- 2.5 All staff are trained at a suitable level for their responsibilities. They undertake a weekly quiz, covering a range of scenarios, which enables them to maintain an informed knowledge and understanding. Staff asserted their preparedness to report any concerns, including about adults working with pupils, should it be necessary. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and both deputies receive regular training from the local authority, including in multi-agency procedures. The DSL contacts local safeguarding agencies for advice when necessary. Records confirm that any safeguarding and wellbeing concerns are promptly reported and recorded in suitable detail to enable any patterns to be identified. As a result, effective support is initiated.
- 2.6 The school implements suitable measures to promote online safety which include robust filtering and monitoring of internet use in school. Pupils receive appropriate guidance in the safe use of the internet and display confidence to report any inappropriate content. Pupils asserted confidently that they can approach a number of staff who will take time to listen to any anxieties they may have and that they feel happy and safe in school. If they express a concern, they receive a response and action is taken where necessary. Records of safeguarding confirm that this happens.
- 2.7 The school's governors are trained in safeguarding and receive safeguarding updates. They monitor safeguarding arrangements through regular reports and visits which also check recruitment practices. The proprietors are similarly kept informed by the DSL and provide suitable overall oversight of arrangements. The standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.
- 2.9 Senior leaders and governors ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the effective implementation of a comprehensive health and safety policy. The accommodation and outside areas, services and equipment are maintained effectively and tested at suitable intervals. This ensures, so far as reasonably practicable, that the school is safe for pupils, staff and visitors. Staff are provided with health and safety information as part of their induction and report that any defects identified are promptly addressed. The standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 Leaders and governors ensure that the accommodation complies with current fire safety regulations. Arrangements are guided by a clear and comprehensive fire safety policy. Staff, including those with fire warden responsibilities, have received suitable training to enable them to take precautions and respond to any incident. Pupils are familiar with evacuation procedures should the fire alarm be raised. Fire detection, prevention and firefighting equipment is maintained appropriately, and all buildings have clearly signed and uncluttered exit routes. The school responds promptly to any recommendations made by annual fire risk assessments carried out by external consultants. These effective measures are unlikely to be adversely affected by the requested additional pupils.

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

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 The school implements suitable arrangements to supervise pupils throughout the day. Leaders are mindful of maintaining correct ratios in the early years and sufficient staff are deployed to supervise all pupils at lunch and breaktimes. Pupils report that staff are always readily accessible. Evidence confirms that current arrangements will not be compromised by additional numbers of pupils.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standard.
- 2.15 Suitable arrangements which cover all areas of school life safeguard the welfare of pupils by assessing and controlling risk. These measures are implemented through a wide range of risk assessments. These clearly identify potential risks together with mitigating actions to reduce their occurrence or potential severity. Staff required to assess risk, such as for educational visits, receive suitable training to inform their assessment. Senior leaders regularly review risk assessments to ensure they remain effective. The standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.16 The school meets the standards.
- 2.17 Leaders ensure that all the required checks are made on staff prior to confirmation of their appointment. These are accurately recorded on a single central record of appointments and in individual staff files, which contain suitable supporting documentation. Governors maintain secure oversight of these arrangements. Evidence indicates that should the material change be approved these standards will continue to be met.

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

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 The school provides suitable toilet and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils in each building. These are sufficient for the requested additional numbers of pupils.
- 2.20 Accommodation and arrangements for the first aid and medical needs of pupils are suitable. These include appropriate accommodation for pupils who are unwell. In addition, the school has sufficient numbers of trained first aiders, including in paediatric first aid, and stores medicines securely.

- 2.21 The school premises are maintained in sufficiently good order to ensure that the health and safety of pupils is promoted.
- 2.22 Leaders and governors have ensured that acoustic conditions and lighting are suitable for the activities that take place.
- 2.23 Drinking fountains, from which pupils fill their own water bottles, are clearly labelled and water in washrooms is labelled as not for drinking. All sinks are fitted with sensor taps to ensure a suitable water temperature.
- 2.24 The school's site provides ample space for recreation and physical education, including for the requested additional pupils. Classrooms for the younger pupils have their own outside learning areas. Additional outside facilities include a large recently installed all-weather surface, playground and covered table tennis area, all of which are also used for pupils' recreation.
- 2.25 The standards are likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.26 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]**

- 2.27 The school meets the standard.
- 2.28 The school's leaders and governors have the required skills and knowledge to effectively fulfil their responsibility to actively promote pupils' wellbeing. Consequently, the independent school standards continue to be met. Leaders' careful appraisal of the implications of adding an additional twenty pupils to the school's roll ensures standards are unlikely to be adversely impacted should the material change be approved.

### **3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection**

#### **Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to extend its roll from 120 to 140 pupils is approved.
- 3.2 Governors and school leaders ensure that suitable procedures for health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment covering the school's accommodation and pupils' activities are in place and consistently implemented. The premises are of sufficient size to accommodate the requested additional numbers and the school is appropriately staffed to meet the educational and welfare needs of twenty additional pupils.

## **4. Summary of evidence**

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors. She visited different areas of the school and talked with some of the oldest pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.