



Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

The Abbey School

September 2023

School's details

School	The Abbey School			
DfE number	870/6008			
Registered charity number	309115			
Address	The Abbey School 17 Kendrick Road Reading Berkshire RG1 5DZ			
Telephone number	0118 987 2256			
Email address	schooloffice@theabbey.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Will le Fleming			
Chair of governors	Mrs Elizabeth Harrison			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	980			
	EYFS	32	Juniors	224
	Seniors	523	Sixth Form	201
Date of inspection	18 September 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 The Abbey School is an independent day school for female pupils. It is a registered charity administered by a governing council. The school is organised into the junior school for pupils aged three to eleven, which includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting, and the senior school, for those aged eleven to eighteen. The school has identified 47 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 302 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in February 2023.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection 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 7 February 2023. 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 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	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 Safeguarding arrangements are organised and implemented effectively in line with current statutory guidance. The school provides appropriate support for pupils' needs, including listening to children. Discussion with pupils showed that staff actively take their views into account, give a response and take appropriate action when concerns are raised. This was confirmed by records of safeguarding incidents. All staff have received suitable training on the most recent changes to statutory guidance, including online safety and arrangements for children missing education. New staff complete a comprehensive induction process to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities. The training includes 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 leads (DSLs) and deputies have sufficient status and authority to undertake their roles and meet regularly with governors with designated responsibility for safeguarding. The DSLs provide regular informal updates to staff with different areas of focus and completes spot checks on their understanding. Designated safeguarding governors visit the school regularly to speak to pupils and staff to check that implementation of safeguarding arrangements is robust and that pupils feel well supported.
- 2.5 In discussion, staff demonstrate an appropriate understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, including for any pupils with SEND. They recognise the importance of 'early help' strategies, know how to report any concerns about pupils or other staff, and do so appropriately. They understand the varied types of child-on-child abuse and the seriousness of such behaviours. They understand how to report any concerns about senior leaders or other adults working with pupils. Appropriately detailed records for safeguarding concerns are maintained electronically, which are regularly monitored by the DSLs.
- 2.6 The governors are trained appropriately in safeguarding. They undertake an annual safeguarding review with due diligence, demonstrating an appropriate degree of rigour in their oversight of arrangements. The governing body demonstrates effective oversight of the filtering and monitoring of technology in line with the most recent guidance.
- 2.7 Since the previous inspection, governors have conducted a comprehensive review of recruitment processes in the school and completed training to provide them with the knowledge to be able to support and challenge these processes. This has ensured that all required recruitment checks are now completed appropriately for all staff recruited before they start work. This includes taking suitable references and conducting prohibition from teaching checks where relevant. A group of senior staff meet weekly with regular involvement from dedicated governors to provide in-depth oversight of the recruitment process.

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

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.
- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. New staff do not start work until all checks have been completed satisfactorily. The weekly process whereby a group of senior leaders review recruitment checks includes review of the management of the single central register of appointments (SCR).

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

- 2.10 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]

- 2.11 The school meets the standard.
- 2.12 The school has fully and successfully implemented the action plan required by the previous inspection. Since that inspection, governors and senior leaders have completed a full review of the recruitment process and ensured that all staff involved have completed training on all aspects of the systems employed. Senior leaders and governors now undertake regular, effective monitoring of the recruitment process. The school's leadership and management now demonstrate good knowledge and skills and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently. Proprietorial review is suitably thorough and supportive to ensure that policies are effectively implemented, and the school actively promotes the wellbeing of all pupils.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

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 groups of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.