



Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

Thetford Grammar School

May 2024

School's details

School name	Thetford Grammar School			
DfE number	926/6128			
Address	Bridge Street Thetford Norfolk IP24 3AF			
Telephone number	01842 752840			
Email address	office@thetgram.norfolk.sch.uk			
Head	Mrs Amanda Faye			
Chair of proprietors	Mr Jay Liu			
Proprietor	Thetford Grammar School Ltd			
Age Range	3 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	201			
	Day pupils	183	Boarders	18
	EYFS	13	Prep	44
	Seniors	107	Sixth Form	37
Date of inspection	14 May 2024			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Thetford Grammar School is a co-educational day and boarding school situated in the centre of Thetford in Norfolk. The school is owned by China Financial Services, of which Thetford Grammar School Ltd, which provides oversight, is a subsidiary. The school is organised into the prep school, which includes the early years setting, the senior school and the sixth form. The school has 52 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 10 have an education, health and care plan. There are 36 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a routine inspection in September 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 routine inspection on 19 to 21 September 2023. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
Part 5, paragraph 25 (maintenance); NMS 9	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

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

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 standards.
- 2.4 Implementation of all aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support for the needs of pupils, including children in the early years and boarders.
- 2.5 Staff demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the safeguarding procedures including those for whistleblowing, children missing in education and the code of conduct for staff. Procedures are implemented effectively to safeguard pupils at risk and those in need. The additional requirements of pupils who have SEND are understood and these pupils receive appropriate support for their welfare and education. Staff show suitable understanding of their responsibilities and have a suitable knowledge of the thresholds for reporting potential issues to safeguarding leaders, including child-on-child abuse. Staff are aware of who to go to if they have a concern or receive a disclosure and that they can make a direct referral to children's services if necessary.
- 2.6 Discussions with safeguarding leaders confirmed that both pupils and staff receive suitable guidance on how to address issues when they arise, and receive appropriate support. Records of safeguarding confirm that the school acts appropriately in any situation that arises. Safeguarding leaders act on any early signs of risk and monitor pupils' wellbeing effectively. The safeguarding policy provides contact details for the required local agencies. Suitable recruitment procedures for staff are outlined in the policy. The training for staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities is in line with local requirements and statutory advice. Training for all staff is of sufficient frequency and quality. Training records are kept centrally.
- 2.7 Suitable arrangements for handling allegations against all staff are included clearly in the safeguarding policy. Records show that safeguarding leaders seek immediate advice from children's services when any allegation is made. They show that procedures are followed effectively, and leaders consider advice given appropriately. The school understands its role in reporting any person to the relevant regulatory bodies where necessary.
- 2.8 Staff, including senior leaders, listen to the views of the pupils effectively. Pupils spoken to confirmed this and said that staff respond to issues they know about quickly and take action when needed. This is confirmed in records of safeguarding incidents. The school has a suitable relationship with outside agencies. Referrals to children's services and the local authority designated safeguarding officer (LADO) are detailed and timely. Behavioural and safeguarding records are comprehensive. Senior leaders understand potential links between bullying or poor behaviour and safeguarding, including sexualised behaviour. Thresholds for referring such incidents to external agencies are understood. Any incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are handled appropriately with due care taken to safeguard the welfare of the bully or victim. Pupils are supported in learning how to keep themselves safe, including online. Monitoring and filtering of technology is effective. Most pupils hand in their phones on arrival at school under appropriate arrangements.

- 2.9 The proprietors are trained appropriately in safeguarding. They provide effective oversight and carry out an annual review of safeguarding appropriately.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 9]

- 2.10 The school meets the standards.
- 2.11 The school has an effective whole school risk assessment which covers all areas of the school, including boarding and the early years. The deficiencies in site security at the time of the previous inspection have been fully addressed. A large number of additional measures have been put in place following effective review and risk assessment. These have ensured that the school now manages risks relating to the school site effectively.
- 2.12 Leaders and managers have created an effective culture of risk assessment among the staff which is becoming embedded into everyday practice. Departments routinely discuss risk mitigation within their areas of the school. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out within each department. Risk assessments for school trips are in place and effective.
- 2.13 Senior leaders work closely with the local authority to minimise the risk to pupils in crossing nearby roads. This includes those between the two sections of the main site and the crossing from the school to the playing fields. The school leaders are proactive in suggesting desirable measures to the local authority.

Premises and accommodation – maintenance [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25; NMS 9]

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 Various effective measures have been taken since the previous inspection to ensure the school site is fully secure. These include systems to secure all external doors. A new high gate has been installed en route to the prep school which shuts and locks effectively. Additional bolts have been fitted in various places around the school.
- 2.16 The school has many old buildings. Since the previous inspection the school has employed a specialist heritage builder to ensure that maintenance is carried out appropriately as soon as a risk or need is identified. A rolling programme of planned maintenance ensure regular repairs and renewal and a suitable system exists to address minor maintenance issues that arise.
- 2.17 The school ensures that all storage of cleaning materials is secure and fit for purpose. All those using these areas have been fully trained in the use and storage of chemicals.

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

- 2.18 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 2]

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 The leadership and management have taken appropriate and proactive steps to address the failings of the previous inspection. The school's action plan has been fully and successfully implemented.
- 2.21 Suitable practices and procedures are implemented which ensure that senior leaders and the proprietors manage safeguarding and welfare arrangements appropriately and monitor compliance

with the standards. The leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are consistently met and the pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted.

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 the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022 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 inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a representative of the proprietorial body. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.