



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Prior Park College

March 2022

School's details

College	Prior Park College			
DfE number	800/6001			
Address	Prior Park College Ralph Allen Drive Bath Somerset BA2 5AH			
Telephone number	01225 835353			
Email address	reception@priorparkschools.com			
Headmaster	Mr Ben Horan			
Chair of governors	Mr John Shinkwin			
Age range	11 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	620			
	Day pupils	488	Boarders	132
	Seniors	417	Sixth Form	203
Date of visit	3 March 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Prior Park College is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. It was established in 1830. The school has a single boarding house for females and a single boarding house for males. All day and boarding pupils are distributed across nine day houses. The school has 157 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of whom has an education, health and care plan. There are 122 pupils who speak English as an additional language. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headmaster, in September 2019. The previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection, which took place on 12 to 14 September 2017.

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.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying), NMS 12	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management), NMS 13	Met

2. Inspection findings

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

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 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including boarders are implemented effectively and pay due regard to current statutory guidance. This includes promoting a culture of listening to pupils. The school ensures that pupils receive a response when they express concerns and appropriate action is taken when necessary. This was confirmed in interviews with pupils and staff and by records of safeguarding, which are appropriately kept. Pupils are given suitable guidance on staying safe online and the school has sufficient filtering and monitoring procedures in place to ensure appropriate use of technology.
- 2.5 Those responsible for safeguarding hold senior positions within the school and are suitably knowledgeable and appropriately trained, including for multi-agency working. All staff are suitably trained in line with locally agreed procedures. Staff understand the different types of child-on-child abuse, including in relation to pupils with SEND, and are suitably aware of issues relating to sexual harassment. Incidents of sexual harassment by pupils are dealt with effectively, including when they occur outside school. There is effective liaison with external agencies including referral to Child and Adolescent Health Services (CAMHS). Pupils' mental health needs are appropriately attended to.
- 2.6 Allegations against adults connected with the school are handled appropriately with correct referral to the LADO and other external agencies where relevant. The school follows the guidance it is given with regard to any disciplinary hearings and makes appropriate referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service when relevant. There is an appropriate staff code of conduct and suitable arrangements for whistleblowing. Interviews with staff confirmed suitable understanding of these and willingness to act appropriately should the need arise. When whistleblowing occurs the governors ensure concerns are investigated appropriately. The school has ensured suitable arrangements are in place during the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain all safeguarding requirements.
- 2.7 The governor responsible for safeguarding meets regularly with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies which enable them to maintain effective oversight of safeguarding policies and their implementation in the main school and the boarding houses. Reports are given regularly to the governing board by the safeguarding governor and the DSL. These highlight appropriate details of any safeguarding incidents including any which occur during school trips or socially in parties that take place outside of school. This ensures that governors have an appropriate level of understanding and are able to provide effective scrutiny and oversight. In addition to continuous monitoring, a suitable annual review of safeguarding is undertaken in line with guidance from the local authority (LA).

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

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.

- 2.9 The school has an appropriate policy to counter bullying and sets out clearly the measures it takes to prevent bullying. Suitable guidance to pupils about bullying and appropriate training to staff is provided by the school. Pupils understand the different types of bullying, know when and how to seek help, and that they should report any bullying they observe. Similarly, staff receive effective training about bullying and are informed weekly about any pupils of concern. When pupils report concerns, these are attended to promptly, with support given to both the victim and the perpetrator. These measures include appropriate action where any elements of bullying could be considered name calling or physical assault and care for any pupils whose mental health may be affected by bullying. Staff are aware of the seriousness of bullying and the need to refer to the DSL any incidents they consider serious. The school logs all bullying incidents in a central record kept by senior leaders. The central log is reviewed regularly to identify any trends, with appropriate action taken to address these. Pupils are confident that if any incidents take place staff are prompt to intervene and help sort them out. Records confirm this.

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; NMS 13]

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 Those with leadership and management responsibilities including those responsible for boarders demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. This ensures that the independent school standards are consistently met, and the well-being of pupils is actively promoted. Appropriate procedures are implemented effectively which allow governors to monitor compliance with regulations.

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 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 the chair of the local board and spoke with the chair of trustees. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.