

## Moor Park School

Moor Park, Richards Castle, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 4DZ

**Date of visit** 23rd March 2015

### Purpose of visit

This was an unannounced emergency visit at the request of the Department for Education which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding (NMS), and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements, particularly, those concerned with safeguarding; pupils' welfare, health and safety, including measures to promote good behaviour, to guard against bullying, and to ensure suitable supervision of pupils.

### Characteristics of the School

Moor Park School is a day and boarding school for boys and girls aged 3 months to 13 years, situated just outside the town of Ludlow. The school currently educates 297 pupils, of whom a small number board full time; other pupils board on an occasional basis. Around a third of pupils are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Most pupils are white British, with a very few different nationalities, mostly Spanish, represented in boarding. The school is contained on an 85-acre site, including the EYFS, based around an eighteenth century house. The school identifies 50 pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); no pupils have a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care plan; a very small number have English as an additional language (EAL). The school is an educational trust and limited company, overseen by a board of governors. The primary focus of the visit was on the prep school. The previous ISI inspection (of the EYFS setting only) was in November 2014.

### Inspection findings

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b) and 8 (a) and (b); NMS 2.2 and 2.3; 11; EYFS 3.4 to 3.8]**

The school does not meet the regulations.

The school does not meet the regulations because its published safeguarding policy omits a number of required details. However, in practice the procedures are effective and provide appropriate support for pupils' needs.

The safeguarding policy, dated November 2014, identifies the need to safeguard children at risk of harm but does not fully detail its duties to children in need; the policy stipulates care for 'looked after children' in the duties of the nominated governor but there is no other clear

statement of duty to children in need. Records show appropriate awareness of the needs of individual pupils, as identified to the school by external agencies, and that these are met. The policy acknowledges guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and makes suitable references to statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014 (KCSIE), but it retains outdated references to the ISSRs of 2010. The policy is provided to parents online. It is supported by a comprehensive staff code of conduct; this reflects the school's context and includes guidance on relevant areas including transporting pupils, and physical contact in instrumental tuition and sports coaching. When interviewed, staff showed suitable understanding of this guidance. The recruitment policy, appropriately cross-referenced, includes the required checks from the ISSRs but makes no reference to checks on disqualification by association for those working in the EYFS; in practice, the school has informed all staff of the requirement to disclose relevant information. The recruitment policy does not state that the school requires a supply agency to provide evidence of a member of staff's DBS check, together with any disclosure, only stating that it requires evidence of checks.

The policy includes definitions of abuse which match the scope of those in KCSIE. It confirms that the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) works closely with local agencies. In practice, the school liaises effectively with local agencies, and follows the procedures of the local children's services, Shropshire, understanding that this is the appropriate source of advice for concerns about any child, wherever they live. The DSL takes appropriately prompt action as required if concerns are expressed about a child. Discussion with the DSL and clear records of child protection, including for pupils in need, confirm that pupils receive the right help, promptly, to address risks and prevent issues escalating, including in any cases of bullying. Staff are briefed regularly on any concerns and, in interviews, showed appropriate awareness of the needs of individual pupils. Suitable, prompt referral is made to external agencies and advice given is followed. Records show that the views of pupils are listened to and this was confirmed by them in interview; they identified a number of staff to whom they can turn and expressed confidence that action would be taken. Pupils say that they understand about staying safe, and feel secure. Parents are informed quickly of any concerns about pupils.

The policy identifies safeguarding elements relevant to the context of the school, such as its EYFS and boarding provision, and includes cross reference to the school's anti-bullying policy; in interviews, staff showed suitable understanding of the school's anti-bullying measures and they understand that bullying relates to safeguarding. The policy guides staff as to what to do if they have concerns and requires immediate reporting to the DSL. Records confirm that this takes place. It is stated that staff must not promise confidentiality to pupils or ask leading questions and reference is made to LSCB procedures. In interviews, staff showed appropriate understanding of this guidance. The policy gives contact details for local agencies but does not state that anyone, including those other than staff, can make a referral.

The school makes provision for reporting a disclosure of abuse or allegation against an adult working in the school. The policy states that the head must contact the LADO immediately following receipt of any allegations. The policy makes provision for reporting to the police. In practice, staff understand their responsibilities for reporting allegations and who to report to. Where such allegations have been made the school has contacted the LADO promptly and followed advice. The policy provides for reporting any person whose services are no longer used where referral criteria are met to DBS and/or NCTL.

The policy names an individual to take responsibility for child protection matters, together with an alternative person in the absence of the DSL. The status of both figures is appropriate. The role of the DSL is outlined appropriately. The policy requires that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay,

and provides for annual review by the governors. The policy identifies a governor to liaise regarding safeguarding, including liaising with the local safeguarding board and other agencies. The policy published on the website does not show evidence that it has been signed off by the governors but minutes of governors' meetings confirm that this happens in practice. The deficiencies in the published policy show that review is not wholly effective.

Appropriate training is stipulated for all staff including the DSL and deputy DSL, volunteers and temporary staff on induction and thereafter. Records of most recent training show that it is up to date for all staff. In practice, all staff are required to read Part 1 of KCSIE and staff confirmed this in interview; records of training substantiate this. Training stipulated for other staff, and its frequency, is not clearly identified as being approved by the LSCB but in practice, this is the case.

The policy identifies that it applies to the EYFS; it names an individual to take responsibility for safeguarding in the EYFS. It makes provision for the use of mobile phones and/or cameras in the setting and an additional policy states clearly that private equipment cannot be used to record images of children.

The policy is suitably worded to reflect the boarding element in the school. It shows awareness of relationships in boarding and the potential for peer abuse. Relevant arrangements are made for residential staff should they be the subject of an allegation but these have not been required to be used.

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – the promotion of good behaviour, including promoting positive relationships in boarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 12; EYFS 3.52 to 3.53;]**

The school meets the regulations.

The school has an appropriate policy to promote good behaviour which is implemented effectively. It is published on the school website, and is dated March 2014. A separate section contains the required elements of behaviour policy for the EYFS. The policy makes no reference to available guidance on promoting good behaviour but in practice it contains many of the elements of most recent guidance. It promotes good behaviour through celebrating achievement with a varied range of rewards including assemblies; colours or certificates etc. Pupils confirmed that they find these helpful. The policy provides for sanctions to be imposed, but does not include the need to recognise particular circumstances, such as where pupils have SEND, in imposing sanctions. In interview, staff showed that they take into account individual pupils' needs when administering sanctions. The types of sanctions used in the school are described but without being linked to specific misdemeanours. In interviews, pupils considered that sanctions are administered fairly and that they understand the sanctions that different types of misbehaviour would invoke. The policy requires staff to record poor behaviour in the conduct book and through similar reporting methods. This enables senior staff to be kept informed and they use the conduct book to monitor regularly the sanctions given, and to identify any trends, although this is not provided for in writing. The conduct book is cross-referenced effectively with other records, such as a 'notes' book which records behavioural incidents. The policy states that corporal punishment is not to be used, and makes the provision that it must not be threatened in the EYFS. Suitable provision for physical restraint is included and arrangements exist for searching pupils, although there has been no occasion to do this. Some reference is made to the school's anti-bullying policy although sanctions related to bullying are only identified in the most serious cases, where exclusion is provided for. The policy makes no reference to training for staff about promoting good behaviour but in interview, staff confirmed that they receive regular training about handling behaviour, most recently in January 2015, and that this is reinforced regularly through staff briefings. The policy makes suitable reference to

keeping parents informed throughout its provision of sanctions and this is implemented effectively. The policy lists a number of ways in which the school educates pupils to behave well and promotes their understanding of the need for good behaviour. Pupils confirmed that they receive guidance through personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, form times and assemblies.

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – measures to guard against bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10; NMS 12]**

The school meets the regulations.

The school has a suitable policy to guard against bullying and this is implemented effectively. It is published on the school website. The policy posted is dated September 2011 and does not therefore reflect advice published since then, such as *Preventing and Tackling Bullying*, although earlier guidance is referred to. It makes suitable reference to e-safety and cyber-bullying but no other reference is made to bullying outside school. It includes some definitions of bullying, but does not include bullying because a child is adopted or is a carer. In interviews, staff showed up-to-date awareness of the types of bullying, in particular cyber-bullying, and that bullying is inclusive of events which occur outside school.

The policy provides for educating pupils about bullying through assemblies and PSHE, and for training staff on induction and on other occasions when required. In interviews, staff confirmed that they receive training about bullying in induction and regular updates through staff briefings. The policy requires pupils to act if they observe bullying and makes suitable provision for supporting victims of bullying and the perpetrators. Pupils are encouraged to confide in an adult. In interviews, pupils confirmed their understanding of what constitutes bullying, recalled the guidance they are given and expressed confidence that any bullying is handled effectively by the school. The policy refers to serious sanctions outlined in the behaviour policy. The anti-bullying policy identifies exclusion as a sanction when persistent bullying occurs. The policy requires staff to seek advice from the deputy head or the head when an incident occurs and states that 'through careful recording, patterns can be identified'. In practice, this is done effectively through keeping detailed logs of bullying incidents. These are reviewed regularly in conjunction with the 'notes' book. Bullying is discussed in senior management meetings and serious incidents are identified to governors. Logs of bullying incidents demonstrate that the school's policy is implemented effectively; due care is shown for both the victim and the alleged bully, appropriate strategies are employed to monitor behaviour and to enable the bully to consider the consequences of his or her actions. The policy involves parents appropriately, including by setting out the school's provision when their child starts at the school. The policy requires parents to be informed when bullying occurs and this is done speedily.

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – ensuring proper supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14;NMS 15]**

The school meets the regulations.

Suitable arrangements are made and implemented to supervise pupils, including at break and lunchtimes, when an appropriate number of staff monitor pupils. Supervision in boarding is appropriate to the number of boarders and includes night times and free time.

**Quality of Leadership and Management [ISSRs Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 13]**

The school meets the regulations.

There are appropriate procedures in place to allow senior leaders and governors to manage safeguarding arrangements effectively and monitor compliance with regulations. Governors discuss behaviour issues and bullying at their meetings. Senior management meetings regularly review known incidents of poor behaviour, and pupils who cause concern. Outcomes of these discussions are communicated to staff through regular briefings. Actions taken as a result are effective in promoting the well-being of pupils.

## **Regulatory action points**

The school does not meet all of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework and therefore it must:

### **Improve the wording of the safeguarding policy as follows [ISSRs Part 3 Regulation 7 (a) and (b) and 8 (a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 to 3.8]:**

1. The policy requires the following amendments to bring it into line with current practice in the school.

- State clearly that the procedures for handling pupil on pupil abuse;
- Clarify that training stipulated for all staff, and its frequency, is as approved by the LSCB;
- Stipulate in the recruitment policy that the school requires a supply agency to provide a copy of a member of staff's DBS check, together with any disclosure; indicate the school's measures to ensure that any disqualification by association in the EYFS is disclosed.
- Remove any outdated references, eg to the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2010.
- Confirm the school's recognition of its duties to children in need.

## **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Make it clearer in the safeguarding policy that contact details for local agencies are provided for any staff, parent or other persons to use, i.e. anyone, not just staff, can make a referral.
2. Update the behaviour and anti-bullying policies to reflect more closely the school's current practice and the most recent non-statutory guidance.