



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Material Change Visit

Prestfelde School

October 2021

School's details

School	Prestfelde School			
DfE number	893/6008			
Registered charity number	1102931			
Address	Prestfelde School London Road Shrewsbury Shropshire SY2 6NZ			
Telephone number	01743 245400			
Email address	office@prestfelde.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Orchard			
Chair of governors	Mr Stuart Hay			
Age range	3 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	350			
	Day pupils	350	Occasional Boarders	20
	EYFS	48	Years 1 and 2	55
	Middle school	116	Senior school	131
Date of visit	18 October 2021			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Prestfelde School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. Founded in 1929, it is situated in 30 acres of parkland on the edge of Shrewsbury in Shropshire. It is administered as a charitable trust with its own governing body.
- 1.2 The school comprises three departments: Little Prestfelde, for pupils aged from three to seven; the middle school, for pupils aged from seven to ten; and the senior school, for pupils aged from ten to thirteen. There is one boarding house where pupils board on an occasional basis.
- 1.3 The school has identified 33 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan. There are no pupils requiring support for English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in November 2018.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.4 This was an unannounced material change visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase its pupil capacity from 313 to 365 from September 2021. The visit focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7	Not met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 6	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 7	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision); NMS 15	Met
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6	Met
ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 - 21 (suitability of staff); NMS 14	Met
ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 30 (premises and accommodation); NMS 3 and 5	Met
ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
ISS 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	Not met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7]

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 does not meet the standards and the requirements.
- 2.4 In most respects the school implements its safeguarding policy effectively. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, including the designated lead for the EYFS, are suitably trained, including in inter-agency working. Staff receive regular training and demonstrate an accurate awareness of recent statutory guidance, including with regard to peer-on-peer abuse and sexual harassment and their responsibility to listen and respond promptly to concerns about pupils. They fulfil this responsibility effectively. The DSL maintains effective liaison with local safeguarding children's services. Safeguarding records incorporate behavioural and mental health concerns, providing a clear picture of individual pupils' needs. The school promotes pupils' mental and emotional health through appropriate pastoral care, support by staff and the services of external counsellors. Both pupils and their parents receive regular guidance in the safe use of online technology. The governing body has appropriate measures to exercise oversight through a termly report from the designated governor for safeguarding who maintains regular contact with the DSL.
- 2.5 The school's policy details suitable arrangements for handling allegations of abuse against staff, volunteers and the head. Discussions with staff confirmed their clear understanding of the school's code of conduct for their own behaviour. They stated confidently that they would be willing to act as a whistle-blower should circumstances require and the school has suitable arrangements for whistleblowing.
- 2.6 In making its own investigation in response to concerns about a member of staff involving safeguarding, prior to contacting the local authority, the school has not followed its own policy and procedures, nor statutory guidance. In this respect, governance, though recognising a safeguarding concern, has not ensured consistently effective oversight of its handling.
- 2.7 The school makes appropriate referral to statutory bodies including the Teaching Regulation Agency when requisite and when advised to do so by local safeguarding partners.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 6]

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.
- 2.9 The school has a suitable policy to address health and safety that is implemented effectively by the estates team with the support of external contractors as appropriate. The required records of installation and servicing are maintained and staff receive suitable training in relation to safe working practice during induction, as well as further training specific to their roles. The health and safety committee meets regularly to review any accidents or concerns. There are sufficient facilities for increased numbers of pupils to learn effectively and safely.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 7]

- 2.10 The school meets the standards.
- 2.11 The school undertakes a regular fire risk assessment for all its buildings and acts upon any recommendations. It ensures that equipment for fire detection, firefighting and alarm systems is inspected and maintained in accordance with requirements. Regular fire drills, which take place both during the school day and in boarding time, are recorded suitably and confirm efficient evacuation of the buildings.

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

- 2.12 The school meets the standards.
- 2.13 The school maintains appropriate levels of supervision throughout the school day. On evenings when boarding takes place, resident staff, supported by house tutors, provide suitable supervision. Pupils confirm that they are always able to locate a member of staff easily. Those who board occasionally assert that they can contact a member of staff easily during the night.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 6]

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 The school undertakes suitable risk assessments for its site and buildings, riskier activities and activities off-site. It has assessed risk in relation to increased numbers of pupils, appropriately. Staff receive guidance in their preparation and they are reviewed regularly by management.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 14]

- 2.16 The school meets the standards.
- 2.17 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised.

Premises and accommodation – toilet and washing facilities [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23; NMS 5]

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 Sufficient toilet and washing facilities for the requested additional number of pupils are dispersed across the school site. These include suitable male and female changing accommodation, showers and disabled facilities.

Premises and accommodation – medical facilities [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 24; NMS 3]

- 2.20 The school meets the standards.
- 2.21 Pupils' medical needs are catered for suitably by qualified staff who are also trained in mental health first aid. Pupils are treated in the medical centre, which is furnished with lockable first aid and medicine storage and a sink. There is appropriate provision within an adjacent sick bay for pupils who are unwell, including boarders who may be ill overnight.

Premises and accommodation – maintenance [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25; NMS 6]

- 2.22 The school meets the standards.
- 2.23 Arrangements to support the health and safety of the school community are efficiently organised. There is an ongoing programme of improvement, maintenance issues are addressed promptly and security is effective.

Premises and accommodation – acoustics [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 26]

- 2.24 The school meets the standard.
- 2.25 The teaching accommodation allows adequate sound insulation.

Premises and accommodation – lighting [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 27]

- 2.26 The school meets the standard.
- 2.27 Both teaching and boarding accommodation have sufficient natural and artificial light. The site has suitable external lighting.

Premises and accommodation – water [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 28]

- 2.28 The school meets the standard.
- 2.29 There is suitable provision for drinking water around the school site and sufficient supplies of hot and cold water to basins and showers.

Premises and accommodation – outdoor space [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 29]

- 2.30 The school meets the standard.
- 2.31 The school site affords sufficient space for recreation and physical education, augmented by indoor sports facilities. These facilities are suitable for increased numbers of pupils.

Premises and accommodation – boarding accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 30; NMS 5]

- 2.32 The school meets the standards.
- 2.33 The school provides suitable sleeping accommodation for pupils who board occasionally. Boarding accommodation has appropriate washing and common room facilities and is sufficiently comfortable.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32]

- 2.34 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]

- 2.35 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.36 The leadership has ensured that additional teaching rooms have been provided and extra staff appointed to manage the additional numbers of pupils requested.

- 2.37 The school has not demonstrated suitable knowledge and skills in that it has not followed safeguarding procedures correctly in relation to the handling of concerns about an adult working in the school. In this respect, leadership and management have failed to ensure that the school meets all the standards and to promote the well-being of pupils.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11

- The school must ensure that any concern relating to an adult working in the school is promptly referred to the local authority and that their advice is given due consideration prior to undertaking an investigation, and at all subsequent stages. [paragraphs 7(a) and (b) and 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7].
- The proprietors must ensure that should a specific safeguarding concern arise, they maintain consistent and rigorous oversight to ensure it is managed correctly. [paragraphs 7(a) and (b) and 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7].

ISSR Part 8, Quality of leadership and management, paragraph 34; NMS 13

- The school must ensure that leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that all the standards are met, and that they actively promote the well-being of all pupils, including boarders. [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.1 and 13.3-13.5]

4. Recommendation with regard to material change request

- 4.1 The school's preparation for the increased numbers is appropriate, but its request for a material change cannot be recommended until all standards are met.

5. Summary of evidence

- 5.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a governor. They visited different areas of the school, and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies. Some activities were carried out remotely and others on site.