



Additional Inspection Report

Whitgift School

September 2023

School's details

School	Whitgift School			
DfE number	306/6014			
Registered charity number	312612			
Address	Whitgift School Haling Park South Croydon Surrey CR2 6YD			
Telephone number	0208 688 9222			
Email address	office@whitgift.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Christopher Ramsey			
Chair of governors	Mr Nick Edwards			
Proprietor	John Whitgift Foundation			
Age Range	10 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1558			
	Day pupils	1205	Boarders	99
	Juniors	433	Middle Years	724
	Sixth form	401		
Date of inspection	12 September 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Whitgift School is a day and boarding school for male pupils aged 10 to 18. Founded in 1596, it is one of three schools owned by the John Whitgift Foundation. The Whitgift School committee, which is nominated by the foundation, is responsible for governance oversight. The school comprises three sections: juniors for pupils aged 10 to 12 years; middle years for those aged 13 to 16; and a sixth form. The school has 203 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), four of whom have an education, health and care plan. One hundred and eight pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in November 2021.

Purpose of the inspection

- 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 2022.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying); NMS 16	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 20	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 19	Met
Part 5, paragraph 30 (boarding accommodation); NMS 4	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints procedure); NMS 14	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.1 The school meets the standard.
- 2.2 The school actively promotes fundamental British values through its ethos and curriculum. School leaders are diligent in communicating their high expectations of pupils' behaviour towards others, in particular those with protected characteristics, including race and SEND. Pupils are enabled to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence effectively because these are actively promoted in the school environment. This is one where opportunities are provided for everyone to pursue their own interests and talents and the successes of all pupils are celebrated. School leaders have established clear expectations of behaviour both in lessons and around the school. The guidance and support given to both staff and pupils ensures pupils have a secure understanding of right and wrong and are ready to accept responsibility for their behaviour. Pupils spoke to inspectors of a culture of respect in the school, in which they are treated fairly in and outside lessons and where respect for those with protected characteristics is the norm. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.3 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.4 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

- 2.5 The school meets the standards.
- 2.6 The school implements its policy effectively to ensure the safeguarding of the pupils, including boarders. Concerns about pupils are managed affectively, including through liaison with external agencies when appropriate. The school works effectively with parents to support pupils about whom there are safeguarding concerns. This includes pupils with SEND, and safeguarding incidents which involve pupils where mental health is a concern or there are challenging family circumstances.
- 2.7 Pupils, including boarders, are confident to report their concerns to trusted adults in school. They stated that they are encouraged to do so by the consistent and fair treatment they experience both in and outside lessons. When pupils express concerns they receive a clear response from staff and appropriate action is taken where necessary. This is confirmed in records of safeguarding.
- 2.8 Staff, including those in leadership positions, and governors have been appropriately trained. A suitable code of conduct for staff is in place, alongside other documents which provide staff with clear guidance and information about the school's expectations of their conduct. This includes a clear explanation of the school's expectations of staff with regard to communications on social media with current pupils and those who have recently left the school. Staff who spoke to inspectors demonstrated a secure understanding of recent training and updated documentation relating to interaction with pupils. Staff understand the school's expectations in this area, including how they interact with pupils in lessons, around the school and on trips.
- 2.9 The school implements appropriate measures to deal with allegations against adults working with pupils. Staff are confident to report concerns about the conduct of other adults. These are managed

effectively and in line with the school's stated policy. This provides appropriately for low-level concerns to be expressed and these are recorded and followed up by senior leaders effectively. Any concerns about discriminatory comments or insensitive behaviour by staff towards pupils are managed appropriately through these processes. Allegations of serious misconduct against adults working in the school are handled appropriately, and in line with local safeguarding procedures. Suitable contact is maintained with the local authority designated officer and advice sought appropriately. Referrals to the police, the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Teaching Regulation Agency have been made as required in recent incidents. The school has responded appropriately to allegations of historic abuse, working alongside external agencies as required.

- 2.10 The proprietor maintains effective oversight of safeguarding in the school through an annual review of policy and procedures and regular reports from school leaders. An effective review of policy and procedures relating to professional expectations of staff has been undertaken in response to recent incidents. This has included an independent review and the drawing up of detailed plans for continuous improvement in safeguarding in the school. The successful implementation of elements of these plans confirms the commitment of the proprietor and school leaders to ensuring the continued effective implementation of its policy.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10; NMS 16]

- 2.11 The school meets the standard.
- 2.12 The school prevents bullying as far as reasonably practicable through the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying policy.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 20]

- 2.13 The school meets the standard.
- 2.14 Appropriate arrangements are in place for the supervision of pupils throughout the school day, after school and in boarding hours.

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

- 2.15 The school meets the standard.
- 2.16 The school takes a strategic approach to the management of risk in the school, including in relation to the safeguarding of pupils. Assessments of risk are made for pupils with mental health concerns and when allegations are made about the behaviour of adults working in the school. These take into account the nature of the associated risks and identify appropriate and specific measures to mitigate them. Staff are aware of the need to self-refer in any situations in which risk could arise in the future or where they perceive such a risk in the conduct of any other adult in the school about whom they have concerns. Risk assessments are implemented when appropriate in relation to the appointment of new members of staff working in the school.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 19]

- 2.17 The school meets the standards.

- 2.18 The school implements a suitably systematic and thorough approach to the recruitment of staff so as to ensure that the required checks are undertaken in a timely manner. Checks are recorded as required on the single central register of appointments.

Premises and accommodation – boarding accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 30; NMS 4]

- 2.19 The school meets the standard.
- 2.20 The school provides suitable accommodation for boarders. Boarders' accommodation is appropriately separate from staff accommodation. The CCTV used by the school does not intrude unreasonably on boarders' privacy.

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

- 2.21 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.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; NMS 14]

- 2.22 The school meets the standard.
- 2.23 The school implements its complaints procedure effectively. This consists of a three-stage process: informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school. Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Formal complaints are handled by senior leaders and governors in accordance with the stated time scales. The single recent complaint which has proceeded to a panel hearing has been conducted in line with the requirements. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful. These indicate whether a complaint involved boarding.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]

- 2.24 The school meets the standard.
- 2.25 Governors exercise effective oversight of the school and demonstrate a suitably detailed knowledge and understanding of the standards. Leaders and managers have the required skills and knowledge to ensure that the other standards are met. School leaders have actively responded effectively to recent safeguarding concerns, including through effective review and evaluation of current procedures. Governors and senior leaders have identified necessary changes to the school culture in terms of behaviour, inclusivity and safeguarding. These have been initiated successfully. Staff spoke of a discernible and positive change in approaches to these areas, citing both recent and longer-term training, support and guidance they have received. Inspection evidence supports these views. The school actively promotes the wellbeing of pupils, including boarders.

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