



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Westonbirt School

October 2022

School's details

School name	Westonbirt School			
DfE number	916/6019			
Address	Westonbirt School Westonbirt Tetbury Gloucestershire GL8 8QD			
Telephone number	01666 880333			
Email address	office@westonbirtschool.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Natasha Dangerfield			
Proprietor	Westonbirt Limited			
Age Range	2 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	736			
	Day pupils	619	Boarders	117
	Nursery	53	Pre-prep	73
	Prep	139	Senior	471
Date of inspection	18 October 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Westonbirt School is an independent boarding and day school. It consists of a pre-prep section, which includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting; a prep section; and a senior section which includes a sixth form. It is located in a rural setting near Tetbury in Gloucestershire. The school is co-educational in the prep section and became co-educational for pupils from the age of 11 in 2019. The school is part of the Wishford Schools Group managed by the sole proprietor in the role of chief executive officer. An advisory body offers advice and support to the proprietor. The school has 140 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. Six pupils have an education, health and care plan. There are 54 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality in May 2019.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase the number of pupils from 599 to 795. The proposed increase does not intend any material change in the number of boarders or significant increase in numbers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting. These areas were not included within the focus of the inspection. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs).

Regulations which are the focus of the visit/inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 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 in the EYFS. The current arrangements are sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- 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 all pupils including those at risk and those in need. The particular vulnerability of pupils with SEND is 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, 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 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. Central records of training content and attendance are comprehensive.
- 2.7 Discussions with the safeguarding lead (DSL) confirmed that both pupils and staff receive guidance on how to address issues when they arise and receive appropriate support. Logs seen in both the prep and senior schools confirm that the school acts appropriately in any situation that arises. The DSL acts straight away on any early signs of risk and monitors pupils together with appropriate staff in the school.
- 2.8 Staff, including senior leaders, listen to the views of the pupils effectively. Pupils spoken to confirm this and say the school responds to all issues quickly and takes action when needed. 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, through monitoring and filtering technology which is effective.
- 2.9 Suitable arrangements for handling allegations against all staff are clearly included in the safeguarding policy. Records show that the school seeks immediate advice from children's services when any allegation is made. Records show that procedures are followed effectively, and the school considers advice given appropriately. The school understands its role in reporting any person to the relevant

regulatory bodies where necessary. There is effective oversight by the proprietor, who carries out an annual review of safeguarding appropriately.

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

2.10 The school meets the standard.

2.11 There is a suitable health and safety policy which is implemented effectively by the school ensuring that all relevant laws are complied with. Records show that testing of utilities is systematically undertaken. Training in health and safety is comprehensive throughout the school including for contractors working on the school site. The recording of accidents is co-ordinated effectively through the medical facility. Senior leaders and the proprietor monitor any trends and take steps to mitigate incidents. The school has strict control over vehicle movement to minimise risks to the pupils and also to suit the requirements of the site's historic nature. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.12 The school meets the standard.

2.13 The school has a suitable fire prevention strategy, fire risk assessment and action plan. Evidence of completion of actions from the 2021 plan confirms that these measures are effective. The fire risk assessment includes all buildings and has been undertaken by a suitably qualified person. Fire procedures are understood by staff and pupils, who all have training provided. Regular fire drills are undertaken and recorded. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.14 The school meets the standard.

2.15 Pupils at all ages of the school are properly supervised by suitably qualified and trained staff. The school is recruiting sufficient new staff to meet its growing needs. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.16 The school meets the standard.

2.17 The school has effective risk assessments for buildings and educational visits as well as aspects such as sport and activities. All appropriate risk assessments are clear and include approaches to be taken to identify and mitigate risks. There are specific and effective plans which assess risks for vulnerable pupils. These are managed through the DSL. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.18 The school meets the standards.

2.19 All the required checks on staff, including supply staff, contractors and the proprietor are carried out and completed before they take up their positions. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

- 2.20 The school maintains a comprehensive and accurate single central register of appointments which includes the dates on which all checks have been completed.

Premises and accommodation – toilets and changing accommodation; medical facilities; maintenance; acoustics; lighting; water supply and outdoor space [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–29]

- 2.21 The school meets the standards.
- 2.22 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to the standard required by the health and safety executive; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; and water provision is adequate. There is suitable outdoor space for physical education and outdoor play. Additional provision across the site has been added since the previous inspection as the senior part of the school has become co-educational. This includes appropriate provision for pupils aged 11 and above in the sports areas and toilet and changing facilities. There is a buildings master plan which is part way through implementation. This provides clarity for each stage of the school's development, including increased pupil numbers, and is intended to be complete by 2025. The plan is sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers and evidence shows that it is likely to ensure the standards continue to be met with the proposed increase in numbers.

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

- 2.23 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]

- 2.24 The school meets the standard.
- 2.25 Suitable practices and procedures are implemented which allow senior leaders and the proprietor to manage safeguarding and welfare arrangements and monitor compliance with the standards. The leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are consistently met. The strategic and operational planning for the proposed increase in numbers actively promotes the wellbeing of all pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to increase its numbers to 795 be approved as planning for the proposed increase across all areas of the school is suitable.

4. Summary of evidence

4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the proprietor and a member of the advisory board. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Miss Sue Duff

Reporting inspector

Mrs Kate McCarey

Assistant reporting inspector