



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Report for a Material Change Visit

Boundary Oak School

May 2022

School's details

School	Boundary Oak School			
DfE number	850/6047			
Address	Boundary Oak School Roche Court Fareham Hants PO17 5BL			
Telephone number	01329 280955			
Email address	office@boundaryoak.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Sophie Savage			
Proprietor	Quo Vadis Education Ltd.			
Age range	2 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	395			
	Day pupils	358	Boarders	37
	EYFS	41	Juniors	175
	Seniors	179		
Date of visit	3 May 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Boundary Oak School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. It is situated in Fareham, Hampshire. The school is organised into: the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children aged two to four; the pre-prep for pupils aged five to eight; the prep school for pupils aged nine to eleven; and the senior school, for those aged twelve to sixteen. Boarding provision is provided in one boarding house for pupils from the age of eight. In 2014, the school came under the ownership of Quo Vadis Education Ltd, which is the registered proprietor. The school has 39 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), one of whom has an education, health and care plan. There are 14 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was an additional inspection visit in January 2021.

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), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.
- 1.3 This was also an unannounced material change visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase the number of pupils for which the school is registered from 350 pupils to 450 pupils mainly in the senior section of the school. 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
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	Met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour); NMS 12	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying); NMS 12	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 6	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 7	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 15	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6	Met
Part 5, paragraph 25 (maintenance of premises and accommodation); NMS 6	Met
Part 5, paragraph 28 (drinking water and water supply)	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 [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 Safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively in line with current statutory guidance, including in boarding. This ensures that the school provides appropriate support for pupils' needs, including listening to children, giving a suitable response and taking appropriate action when concerns are raised. In interviews pupils confirmed that their views and concerns are heard and acted upon. All staff have received suitable training on recent changes to statutory guidance and online safety. New staff complete a comprehensive induction process to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities, including details of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) Part 1 and Annex B; the staff code of conduct; whistleblowing procedures; procedures for children missing education; and the school's behaviour policy. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies have sufficient status and authority to undertake their roles, and have appropriate levels of training, which is in line with local procedures. The DSL provides regular informal updates to staff and opportunities for discussion on any changes to safeguarding policy and its implementation. Handling of any allegations against adults connected with the school is effective and includes prompt and appropriate liaison with external agencies. Pupils understand how to stay safe online and there is suitable monitoring of technology and its use.
- 2.5 Discussions with staff confirm that they have a full understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They recognise the importance of 'early help' strategies, know how to report any concerns about pupils or other staff, and do so appropriately, including low-level concerns. Staff understand the varied types of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment, the seriousness of such behaviours and the vulnerability of certain groups to these, including pupils with SEND. They understand how to report any concerns about senior leaders. Appropriate records for safeguarding concerns are maintained, and these are regularly monitored by the DSL. These show timely and appropriate liaison with both parents and local agencies. The proprietor provides the safeguarding team with regular support and appropriate challenge; undertakes an annual safeguarding review with due diligence and good knowledge of the guidance; requires appropriate staff recruitment checks; and demonstrates rigour in its oversight of arrangements. The arrangements are likely to be adequate to meet the needs of the additional number of pupils envisaged in the material change application.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 12]

- 2.6 The school meets the standards.
- 2.7 The school has a suitable and recently updated behaviour policy which is available on the school website. It sets out the aims of the school and outlines both rewards to promote good behaviour and the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour. The policy promotes a positive approach to behaviour management. It sets out an approach to the rewards and sanctions to be used which focuses on the needs of individual pupils, including sanctions that are of community benefit. Staff and pupils understand the policy. Staff ensure that it is implemented effectively, although

implementation is kept under constant review while the new structure is developed. Detail of incidents is recorded appropriately electronically and monitored regularly by senior staff to identify patterns and any action to be taken. A record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour. These show that staff take into account the specific needs of individual pupils, including those with SEND and different age groups, when dealing with any misbehaviour. The arrangements are likely to be adequate to meet the needs of the additional number of pupils envisaged in the material change application.

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 a suitably detailed policy to counter bullying. This sets out clearly the measures the school takes to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents when they occur. These are implemented effectively. Staff and pupils fully understand their responsibility for reporting any instances of bullying, including any sexualised bullying or bullying involving misogyny or race. Records show that such reporting happens in practice. Resolution of bullying incidents involves discussion with both perpetrator and victim, and parents of all parties are involved at an early stage and kept informed.
- 2.10 The school is fully aware that such incidents may become safeguarding issues and may necessitate the involvement of the police or the local authority children's services. Those with designated responsibilities understand the thresholds for such referrals. All bullying instances are recorded in appropriate detail, using dedicated software. Records indicate that any bullying incidents that do occur within the school are taken seriously and dealt with effectively. The arrangements are likely to be adequate to safeguard the welfare of the additional number of pupils envisaged in the material change application.

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

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 The school has an appropriate written health and safety policy which covers the areas suggested by the relevant health and safety laws. Senior leaders and qualified staff ensure that this is fully implemented. They meet regularly to monitor and address all aspects of health and safety for the site necessary to ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are safe. The proprietor oversees these processes effectively through the completion of a full audit of health and safety structures each year. New staff are provided with appropriate health and safety information through the induction process and are provided with regular updates and training online as a reminder of key factors relating to their roles. The arrangements are likely to be adequate to meet the needs of the additional number of pupils envisaged in the material change application.

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

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 The school has an appropriate fire policy which complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in aiming to eliminate risk. The designated competent person has appropriate training for their role and all other staff receive regular training including for the use of extinguishers and fire warden training in line with their responsibilities. Fire risk assessments for each building are completed regularly and all action points are addressed in a timely manner. Fire drills are undertaken regularly including during boarding time and evacuation times recorded. Fire alarms and extinguishers are appropriately placed around the site and maintained regularly. Regular tours of the site ensure that fire doors are kept closed and escape routes kept clear. The arrangements are likely to be

adequate to meet the needs of the additional number of pupils envisaged in the material change application.

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

2.15 The school meets the standards.

2.16 The school provides suitable guidance for staff which outlines the expected process for supervision at all times of day, including at night in boarding, and for a range of activities, including off-site visits. Staff rotas are published each term which demonstrate a suitable number of staff on duty during break times and lunchtimes including a member of the senior management team. These rotas are reviewed regularly and amended to ensure the safety of pupils. Pupils have completed a safeguarding audit which identified a small number of areas where inappropriate behaviour is more likely to occur. These areas are included in the staff guidance for supervision at key times. Close circuit television has been installed, with due regard for privacy, and suitable adjustments have been made to the use of these areas. The arrangements are likely to be adequate to meet the needs of the additional number of pupils needing supervision, as envisaged in the material change application.

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

2.17 The school meets the standards.

2.18 A suitable risk assessment policy and comprehensive arrangements are in place to ensure that risks are appropriately identified. Suitable action is taken to mitigate them and reduce risk across the school site. All risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated and staff have easy access to the full range through the school intranet. All staff who are involved in producing risk assessments for activities, trips off site, or areas of the school, including boarding, receive appropriate training on induction, and this is updated when necessary. The planning process for off-site visits includes a detailed process of risk assessment. This is well developed and used consistently. Suitable welfare risk assessment is made for pupils or where new risks are identified. Suitably qualified senior staff oversee the risk-assessment process, sign off the assessments and evaluate their effectiveness. The arrangements are likely to be adequate to meet the needs of the additional number of pupils envisaged in the material change application.

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

2.19 The school meets the standards.

2.20 The proprietor and senior leaders have relevant systems in place to ensure that premises and accommodation, including in the boarding house, are maintained to a standard such that the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured. A rolling on-going programme of maintenance and refurbishment is in place which is updated regularly. Staff report that any concerns they report are dealt with swiftly. The arrangements are likely to be adequate to ensure the safety of the additional number of pupils envisaged in the material change application.

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

2.21 The school meets the standards.

2.22 Suitable drinking water is provided which is readily accessible, separate from the toilet facilities and clearly labelled as suitable for drinking. The toilets and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. Regular checks are made and recorded to ensure that the temperature of hot water supplies does not pose a scalding risk. On one occasion when water supply was disrupted the

school appropriately provided bottled water and portable toilet facilities for pupils and staff while the water main was mended. The arrangements are likely to be adequate to meet the needs of the additional number of pupils envisaged in the material change application.

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; NMS 13]

- 2.24 The school meets the standards.
- 2.25 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently. Proprietorial review is suitably thorough to ensure that policies are appropriate for the needs of the pupils and are effectively implemented in practice to actively promote the well-being of all pupils.
- 2.26 A process of regular review and audit by senior leaders and the proprietor has appropriately identified areas for improvement and action has been taken in a timely manner. The arrangements are likely to be adequate to meet the needs of the additional number of pupils envisaged in the material change application.

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 requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

4. Recommendation with regard to material change request

- 4.1 It is recommended that the request to increase overall numbers to 450 pupils to be approved.
- 4.2 The school applied to increase their overall numbers just under two years ago, but the process has been delayed by the pandemic. The school is registered for 350 pupils, currently have 395 pupils in the school and wish to increase this to 450.
- 4.3 Most of these extra pupils will be accommodated in the senior section of the school allowing for the school to gradually move to three forms for all senior groups from Years 8–11. Year 7 already consists of three forms of 20 pupils. The curriculum is already well established for these older year groups. The school offers a wide range of subjects at GCSE accommodating the wishes of individual pupils where possible. A broad range of activities are available to supplement the curriculum for all age groups.
- 4.4 Effective planning has been completed for the introduction of the extra pupils. The site would easily accommodate the larger numbers. Significant development on land surrounding the school site has required a new driveway which will allow for a better one-way system for drop off and pick up of pupils in the future.
- 4.5 The school has increased the capacity of the dining facility effectively and added extra specialist teaching spaces for design technology, food technology and information and communication technology (ICT). Capacity for science teaching has been increased. Use of the theatre has been changed to allow exclusive use of the building for drama and performance. Additional toilet facilities ensure sufficient capacity and existing facilities have been refurbished. Current temporary buildings are being replaced as part of a rolling programme.
- 4.6 The age range and number of boarding pupils has been reduced and will in future cater for pupils from 11–16 only. This has allowed use of some previously boarding designated areas to be used as offices or teaching areas.
- 4.7 The proprietor has ensured that safeguarding structures have sufficient capacity to manage the larger numbers. The DSL role is now full time and there is a suitable number of deputies. The school has also employed a trained counsellor.

5. Summary of evidence

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