

## The Elms School

Colwall, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR13 6EF

**Date of visit** 09 March 2016

### Purpose of visit

This was an announced visit carried out at the request of the DfE to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan, submitted following an integrated inspection in June 2015. The focus was on aspects of safeguarding; premises and accommodation, including for boarding; provision for the health and well-being of boarders and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

### Characteristics of the School

The Elms School is set in a rural location, four miles from Malvern. It is a co-educational preparatory school with pupils from the ages of 3 to 13. All pupils from Year 4 upwards have a bed at the school and most pupils board for at least one night a week. The majority of the older pupils are full-time boarders. The school has 190 pupils on the roll. There are 17 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school has identified 63 pupils with a variety of special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND). The majority of these receive extra support either individually or in the classroom. No pupil has an education health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.

### Inspection findings

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b) and 8.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety, and National Minimum Standard 11, under Child Protection]**

The school meets all the Regulations and Standards.

The safeguarding policy reflects current statutory guidance. The school has ensured that the governing body undertakes an annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures. Additional appropriate changes were made and approved by governors in November 2015. The process of review set out includes governors' consideration of all elements of the policy: staff training; a review of the single central register; links with external agencies; records of incidents and notes of any safeguarding issues that may emerge. This was confirmed by a review of governors' minutes concerning safeguarding, and interviews with both governors and senior staff.

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessments [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 16.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety and National Minimum Standards 5.1 and 6.3]**

The school meets the Regulation and Standards.

The school has reviewed its procedures and established effective monitoring of the school's risk assessment policy and its implementation, including in boarding, and has taken appropriate action to reduce risks identified.

As well as thorough risk assessments being undertaken for school trips and off-site activities, the assessment of the risks inherent on the school's extensive site is now an integral part of its health and safety management plan. The risk assessment policy has been informed by advice taken from an independent assessor. There is a complete, overarching, risk assessment for the whole school site to ensure that existing risk assessments are fit for purpose. Examples seen showed that strong practice was now in place.

This has been implemented, with recommendations on the outcomes of risk assessment routinely provided to the governors' welfare, health & safety committee.

**Staff recruitment and checks on other adults [ISSR Part 4, paragraph 18. (2)(a), under Suitability of staff and proprietors and Part 3, paragraphs 7. (a) and (b), and 8. (a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety, and National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults]**

The school meets all the Regulations and Standard.

A scrutiny of recent appointments indicates that all staff have undergone the required checks before commencing work at the school. The single central register (SCR) is accurately maintained and supervision arrangements are recorded, where relevant. Procedures are carefully monitored by the leadership and governors.

**Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25 under Premises and accommodation, and National Minimum Standard 6.2 under Safety of Boarders]**

The school meets the Regulation and Standard.

The actions taken show that the school is now managing risk with greater rigour and measures are effective in ensuring the safety of pupils and boarders.

The school maintains the school premises, accommodation and facilities therein to a standard, such that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are ensured. There has been careful consideration of the recommendation to separate vehicles and pedestrians across the school site. This has resulted in a traffic plan with appropriate posts and ropes to separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Key pad locks have been installed on doors to buildings on school grounds and security cameras been introduced at key points.

There has been an effective review of the premises resulting for example in a new non-slip dining room floor, new flooring in the medical room and carpeting on some stairways.

**Boarders' health and well-being [National Minimum Standard 3.1, under Boarders' health and well-being and National Minimum Standard 5.3 under Boarding accommodation]**

The school meets the Standards.

A comprehensive system of written welfare plans for any boarder deemed to have emotional or medical needs has been implemented in association with boarding staff. The school has produced detailed welfare plans and disseminated written information and guidance to members of staff to ensure consistency of treatment for boarders with medical or emotional needs.

The school has ensured that suitably private washing facilities are provided for boarders. Shower curtains have been fitted.

**Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraphs 34.(1)(a) and (b), under Quality of leadership and management in schools, and National Minimum Standards 13.1, 13.2 and 13.4, under Management and development of boarding]**

The school meets the Regulation and Standard.

The school has established systems to ensure that the school leadership demonstrates the knowledge and skills required to meet the ISSRs and NMS consistently. This has included the appointment of a new staff to enable the rigorous review of its procedures.

Systems for the governors to monitor the school's regulatory responsibilities are rigorous and have addressed areas of non-compliance in relation to requirements covering welfare, the suitability of staff, premises and management and boarding. There is formality, clarity and consistency in communication by documenting procedures to govern practice across the whole school, including boarding. The governors receive regular updates from boarding welfare meetings and governors now visit the boarding houses.

Timely and appropriate training has taken place for staff, including those in boarding, to enable them to carry out their roles effectively. Staff have received training in how to implement the policy for physical restraint. There has been ongoing support and monitoring to assist boarding staff in their roles as well as identifying needs. Records of staff training are now carefully maintained and monitored.

The school development plan contains clear criteria for success and there are now clear means to judge its success through regular review. Its timely implementation is monitored by governors and managers on a regular basis. There is a plan in place for boarding development and self-evaluation for improvement' which are currently under careful consideration and include the development of a restructured boarding team from September 2016.

The action points of the previous inspection have all been met.

## **Regulatory action points**

The school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.