



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Additional Inspection Report

Bloxham School

June 2023

School's details

School	Bloxham School			
DfE number	931/6002			
Registered charity number	1076484			
Address	Bloxham School Bloxham Banbury Oxfordshire OX15 4PE			
Telephone number	01295 724341			
Email address	headmaster@bloxhamschool.com			
Headteacher	Mr Paul Sanderson			
Chair of governors	Mrs Lis Lewis-Jones			
Proprietor	Woodard Schools Corporation			
Age range	11 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	549			
	Day pupils	163	Boarders	386
	Seniors	373	Sixth Form	176
Date of inspection	7 June 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Bloxham School is an independent, co-educational boarding and day situated in Bloxham in north Oxfordshire, two miles from Banbury. Bloxham was founded in 1860 and operates as a charitable trust under the trusteeship of the Woodard Schools Corporation. The school comprises three sections: the lower school for pupils aged 11 to 13; the upper school for pupils aged 14 to 16; and the sixth form. The school has a house providing mixed gender accommodation, suitably segregated, for boarders in Years 7 and 8. From Year 9, pupils are accommodated in one of four male and three female gender houses. The school has identified 46 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 12 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in January 2020 followed by a material change inspection which took place in February 2023.

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 1, paragraph 2 (curriculum); NMS3	Met
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, paragraphs 9 (behaviour) and 10 (bullying); NMS 15 and 16	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (Provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints); NMS 14	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2; NMS 3]

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 The school implements a suitable curriculum policy effectively. This reflects the school aims, in particular its intention to build on its strong Christian ethos and encourage kindness and tolerance. The curriculum is supported by appropriate schemes of work which promote the welfare and personal development of pupils. The school effectively implements an appropriate equity, diversity and inclusion policy. The personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) programme is embedded successfully into the curriculum and effectively encourages respect for other people paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act. Boarders are protected from discrimination effectively. Staff have received external advice and training on the teaching of PSHE and pupils have many forums for discussion of topics pertinent to their wellbeing. The PSHE curriculum is reviewed regularly and, through listening to pupil suggestions it has frequently been re-evaluated to ensure it is suitable to meet their needs. Teaching of PSHE is further supported by engaging visiting speakers to enable both pupils and staff to further understand any issues raised.

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

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 The school actively promotes fundamental British values which facilitate the personal development of pupils. These promote successfully the school aims of preventing discrimination, valuing diversity, and promoting equality & dignity. In discussion, pupils, including boarders, confirmed that they feel part of a supportive community which is warm, friendly and happy. They feel they are listened to and encouraged to contribute to the development of their own personal wellbeing.
- 2.5 The school responds effectively to any instances of disrespect amongst pupils, which the school recognises occur occasionally. Senior leaders address the relevant issues immediately and records show that any such incidents have been handled in accordance with the school's stated policies and procedures. In response to advice from outside agencies and from pupils' views they have adjusted the education of pupils to be more relevant in tackling issues of race and gender in today's society.

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.6 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.7 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

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.
- 2.9 Discussion with pupils and staff and evidence from records of safeguarding indicate that the school's safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively and in line with current statutory guidance. The safeguarding policy and procedures follow the guidance of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022* (KCSIE) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018). They effectively promote pupils' welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies receive appropriate levels of training in

line with local procedures and at a level commensurate with their roles. In discussion, they demonstrated suitable experience and knowledge about their responsibilities. Staff and governors receive regular, appropriate training in safeguarding. Staff demonstrated appropriate understanding of *KCSIE*, the school's whistleblowing procedure and their responsibility towards e-safety and preventing extremism and radicalisation. They understand the need to report any concerns to the DSL. New staff undergo suitable face-to-face induction training. Pupils report that they know who to go to with a concern and feel confident it would be handled quickly and appropriately. Safeguarding records confirm that this happens in practice. Boarders expressed confidence in their house parents and matrons to handle any concerns.

- 2.10 The governor responsible for safeguarding maintains effective oversight and a suitable annual review of safeguarding is undertaken by the governing body. Safeguarding is always on the agenda of the regular governors' meetings that take place each term. Appropriate records for safeguarding concerns are maintained and regularly monitored by the safeguarding governor. They show timely liaison with the local authorities, where advice is sought when required.
- 2.11 The pastoral and safeguarding team are aware of the particular vulnerabilities of pupils with protected characteristics. Any concerns that have been raised in relation to pupils' characteristics have been handled appropriately and recorded in detail. Staff are aware of the need for vigilance in relation to pupils' inappropriate use of social media and messaging. The school has suitably strong filters on its network but recognise that most incidents happen out of school, especially in holiday periods. Appropriate online education is provided regarding appropriate use of media. Pupils confirm that they are taught how to stay safe online.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour and bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 9 and 10; NMS 15 and 16]

- 2.12 The school meets the standards.
- 2.13 The school has suitable behaviour and anti-bullying policies which are implemented effectively. The policies promote respect appropriately for those members of the community with protected characteristics, particularly those associated with race and gender. The policies and related sanctions are known and understood by staff and pupils who receive appropriate training and guidance. They are applied consistently and where relevant, due regard is paid to any pupil's SEND. Senior leaders have encouraged pupils to voice their concerns when they perceive sanctions to be too lenient, especially with regard to incidents relating to protected characteristics. They have responded to pupil views and increased the level of sanction where required. Pupils in discussion confirmed their satisfaction that the school has listened and responded appropriately to them. Whilst there is a suitable range of escalating sanctions the school's priority is to work with pupils to help them understand the consequences of their behaviour and to learn from it.
- 2.14 Records of misbehaviour are suitably detailed to allow any trends to be identified. All misbehaviour amongst pupils is assessed for potential bullying or safeguarding issues. Pupils in discussion reported that bullying is rare because pupils do not tolerate it and are keen to support those who are subject to unkindness. Documents show that parents are involved in the early stages of behaviour and bullying incidents.

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

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.

- 2.16 Suitable arrangements are in place for risk assessment across the school. Senior leaders promote an effective culture of assessing risk to any vulnerable pupil, in particular regarding pupils where safeguarding or behavioural issues have been identified. The school's risk assessment policy ensures that vulnerable pupils are identified and suitable approaches taken to mitigate any risk to their wellbeing, especially in regard to those with specific needs. An effective risk assessment is made to ensure continual monitoring of any pupil who has been affected by intolerance regarding their gender or race.

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

- 2.17 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]

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 The school has an appropriate, three-stage complaints policy for parents that is effectively implemented. Formal complaints or appeal panel hearings are rare but detailed records are kept of any informal complaints considered by senior leadership. The school adheres to the timescales published in its policy.
- 2.20 The school has a clear and easily accessible process for boarders to raise their own complaints about boarding provision and boarders are not penalised for raising a complaint in good faith. The records of complaints show that this is implemented appropriately and that the school has responded appropriately to any concerns relating to pupils' protected characteristics.

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

- 2.21 The school meets the standards.
- 2.22 The leadership and management have demonstrated a responsible attitude and approach to handling any concerns brought to them by pupils. They have enhanced the school's PSHE, changed the sanctions policy and introduced new forums for pupils to express their views and concerns. By working with the whole school community, they have demonstrated good skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, consistently meet the standards and to actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils, including in boarding.

3. Summary of evidence

3.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors. They talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mrs Maureen Bradley

Reporting inspector

Mr David Gareth Morgan

Assistant reporting inspector