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Advice Note for an Additional Inspection

St Benedict's School (Ealing)

December 2021

School's details

School	St Benedict's School (Ealing)
DfE number	307/6006
Registered charity number	1148512
Address	St Benedicts' School 54 Eaton Rise Ealing London W5 2ES
Telephone number	020 8862 2000
Email address	headmaster@stbenedicts.org.uk
Headmaster	Mr Andrew Johnson
Chair of governors	Mr Joe Berger
Age range	3 to 18
Number of pupils on roll	1048

EYFS	38	**Juniors**	259
Seniors	567	**Sixth Form**	184

Date of visit	8 to 9 December 2021

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1.1 St Benedict's School (Ealing) is a Roman Catholic co-educational day school. Founded by the monks of Ealing Abbey in 1902 as a school for male pupils, it has been fully co-educational since 2007. It became a discrete charity, separate from Ealing Abbey, with its own independent board of governors in 2012. The school is a company limited by guarantee. The board of governors comprises the trustees of the school. The school has identified 234 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 37 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in January 2020.

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) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework. The inspection was asked to focus specifically on the school's provision for, and implementation and teaching of, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) excluding other curricular areas.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraph 2(A) (relationships and sex education)	**Met**
Part 1, paragraph 3 (teaching)	**Met**
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)	**Met**
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	**Met**
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour)	**Met**
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying)	**Met**
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	**Met**
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	**Met**
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	**Met**
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	**Met**

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum, relationships and sex education and teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2, 2A and 3].

2.1 The school meets the standards.

2.2 The school's scheme of work for PSHE includes all of the requirements outlined in the statutory guidance for relationships and sex education (RSE). The recently revised policy for RSE is available to parents on the school's website. In drawing up the policy and the scheme of work, leaders have consulted parents, pupils and staff, and taken their views into consideration. The scheme is designed appropriately to enable pupils to gain knowledge and understanding, to acquire personal and social skills and to develop positive attitudes and values. Topics are revisited in subsequent years in order to build up deeper understanding.

2.3 Teaching of RSE forms part of the regular timetable throughout the school, including the sixth form, and key elements of the programme are reinforced through assemblies and tutorials. Each unit of work has specific learning objectives and opportunities for assessment related to these objectives. The scheme of work takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. The scheme reflects the school's aims, encourages respect for other people and pays particular regard to the protected characteristics which are set out in the Equality Act 2010.

2.4 To support the teaching of RSE, leaders have provided a bank of suitable teaching material for all of the topics covered within the curriculum. These materials draw suitably on those provided by professional organisations whose work is devoted to the teaching of PSHE and RSE. They include appropriate content which addresses effectively the issues related to sexual harassment and violence. Staff confer with responsible senior leaders about how to use these materials when teaching, in order to provide effective learning for pupils. Some pupils who responded to the questionnaire and who were interviewed regarding RSE expressed the view that on occasions teaching is over-repetitive and does not always answer their questions adequately. They would welcome increased opportunity to discuss RSE issues in more depth. Leaders have accepted this feedback and are implementing enhanced training for staff to facilitate deeper engagement with pupils regarding aspects of RSE.

2.5 Some female pupils said that they would like to have more time as a single gender group with female staff to discuss some RSE matters and inspectors support their viewpoint. Staff are supportive of pupils who have protected characteristics, including those for whom personal gender assignment or orientation is particularly important. The needs of these pupils are taken into account sensitively and positively in planning the curriculum and teaching. Leaders ensure those pupils with SEND have the support they need to access the curriculum.

2.6 Leaders have implemented the RSE curriculum at a suitable pace within the restraints posed by the interruption to normal school life as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

2.7 The school meets the standard.

2.8 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Leaders proactively promote respect for those with protected characteristics, including those with SEND and for all gender orientations.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

2.9   The school meets the requirements.

2.10   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

2.11   The school meets the standard.

2.12   The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs provide sufficient cover for the requirements of the role across the school, including in the early years. They and all other staff are suitably trained. All staff understand the definitions of different types of abuse, including child-on-child abuse, what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence. They are aware of the additional potential vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND to experiencing or perpetrating these behaviours and act effectively to guard against any such incidents. Leaders have taken effective steps to address the issues related to sexual harassment and violence. Staff understand the procedures to follow should a safeguarding concern be raised, including any such concerns about staff and other persons in contact with pupils. Senior leaders are aware of the range of support available to children and young people who are victims or who perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour.

2.13   Staff liaise effectively with the local authority designated officer (LADO) and other local safeguarding partners, including the police where appropriate, making prompt referrals where necessary. Staff understand the need to refer to other agencies, such as the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Teaching Regulation Agency, when appropriate. Leaders have dealt promptly and effectively with any instances of sexual harassment or sexual violence which have been brought to their attention.

2.14   Arrangements for listening to and supporting pupils who have been affected by safeguarding issues are effective. Some pupils commented in the questionnaire and when interviewed that they might deal with any such incidents amongst themselves. However, they also said they would be confident to share concerns with staff if need be. Staff are working assiduously to encourage pupils to share any concerns, including those related to sexual harassment or sexual violence, as quickly as possible and not to tolerate any such instances should they occur. Staff teach pupils how to keep safe, including when online, and provide suitably filtered and monitored internet access. Staff pass safeguarding information on to the receiving schools when pupils leave to go elsewhere.

2.15   Governors maintain suitable oversight of safeguarding, including through an appropriate annual review and have responded appropriately to any issues raised. They have suitable understanding of matters relating to sexual harassment and sexual violence and receive training in this regard. They are receptive to any information raised about concerns, demonstrating a readiness to address them robustly. They ensure that effective recruitment measures are in place.

2.16   Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have taken all necessary precautions to ensure, as far as possible, the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff. Parents, pupils and staff have been kept fully informed about the school's procedures through regular updates.

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

2.17   The school meets the standard.

2.18   Leaders take effective measures to promote positive behaviour and pupils' respect for others, including for those with protected characteristics. Leaders take careful steps to monitor the different types of poor behaviour that may be exhibited by pupils and respond appropriately. The school's

records of behaviour and serious sanctions show that staff have acted appropriately in response to any negative behaviour. This includes the use of effective sanctions to deal with any inappropriate sexual behaviour. Staff record and analyse any incidents related to sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to prevent abuse. The approach to managing behaviour, including sanctions, effectively reinforces a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated.

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

2.19   The school meets the standard.

2.20   The school has an appropriate policy for bullying which sets out clearly the measures staff will take to guard against bullying in the first instance and to deal with it should it occur. This includes any bullying related to the special educational needs of pupils which leaders are clear is not tolerated and which anti-bullying measures are effectively designed to prevent. Staff and pupils fully understand their responsibility for reporting any instances of bullying, and records show that this happens in practice. Resolution of bullying incidents involves discussion with both perpetrator and victim, and parents of all parties are kept informed. Leaders are fully aware that such incidents may become safeguarding issues and may necessitate the involvement of external services such as the local authority or the police.

2.21   Records indicate that when bullying incidents occur within the school they are taken seriously and are dealt with effectively. All bullying instances are recorded appropriately using dedicated software for that purpose.

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

2.22   The school meets the standard.

2.23   The school has adequate arrangements for the supervision of pupils within lessons, as they move around the school and at breaks and lunchtime.

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

2.24   The school meets the standard.

2.25   The school has an appropriate policy for risk assessment and ensures that risk assessments are drawn up for areas of the school and specific activities which might pose a risk to pupils. Risk assessments regarding safeguarding incidents are adequate.

2.26   Leaders have been very thorough in assessing the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and have implemented measures to manage on-line teaching, teaching within the classroom, movement around the school, and break and lunchtime arrangements. These are well designed to promote, as far as possible, the health and safety of staff and pupils.

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

2.27   The school meets the standard.

2.28   Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through 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. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

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

2.29   The school meets the standard.

2.30   The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of pupils. The governors and senior leaders take effective actions in dealing with any allegations in various media.

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

4. Summary of evidence

4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the designated safeguarding governor. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils as well as reviewing the response to questionnaires of parents, pupils and staff. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.