

BEECHWOOD SACRED HEART SCHOOL

Pembury Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 3QD

DATE OF VISIT

23 May 2016

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Beechwood Sacred Heart School is a boarding and day school for pupils aged between three and eighteen years. The school was founded in 1915 as a Catholic school for girls. Since 1973, the school has been governed by a mainly lay governing body, the members of which are trustees of the Beechwood Trust. The co-educational preparatory school was opened in the 1980s and the school became fully co-educational in 2008. Boys were able to become boarders in 2014. The school educates 386 pupils, of whom 176 are boys and 210 are girls. There are 141 pupils in the junior school up to Year 6. Of these, 29 children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The school has identified 89 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive support for their learning. Fifty-two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). The school had a full inspection in February 2014 and a short visit in October 2015.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This was an unannounced visit carried out at the request of the DfE to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the short visit on 7 October 2015. The focus of the visit was on the Welfare, health and safety of pupils (ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16); and the Manner in which complaints are to be handled (ISSR Part 7).

INSPECTION FINDINGS

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

The safeguarding policy complies with regulatory requirements. Training records and signed declarations show that all staff, including peripatetic music staff and catering staff, have been briefed on the required changes to the policy and have undertaken appropriate updated safeguarding training. Suitable alternative training arrangements have been made for any staff absentees. At interview, staff confirmed that they receive regular training and briefings, and that they had read the revised policy and the staff code of conduct. They stated that they knew the identity of the designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and that they worked from the current versions of statutory guidance: *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (WT)*. Staff made it clear that they understood the distinction between children in need and children at risk, and they knew that anyone can make a referral to the local safeguarding children services if necessary. Staff also appreciate that a bullying incident of particular seriousness may have to be treated as a child protection concern.

The educational and pastoral committee now has wider terms of reference to enable it to contribute more effectively to the governors' annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures. The next annual safeguarding review is scheduled for June 2016 and the school confirmed that the clerk to the governors has

been instructed to ensure that the board's minutes demonstrate suitable oversight and reflect appropriate depth and breadth of the review.

There is frequent liaison between the DSL and the designated safeguarding governor and all the governors have lately undergone safeguarding training. Records of formal and informal referrals to the local safeguarding children services are correctly completed and maintained.

The pupils interviewed said that they felt safe, are listened to and that they are very well looked after at school. Staff confirmed that there is a culture of vigilance and a willingness to listen to children and to report concerns within the school, however minor they may seem.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9, and NMS12]

Behaviour of pupils was observed to be very good. Pupils and staff interviewed confirmed that the overall ethos and expectations of the school lead to good behaviour and that major sanctions for misbehaviour are rarely necessary. Procedures for managing behaviour take appropriate account of the ages and needs of pupils.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10, and NMS 12]

Pupils interviewed stated that bullying is not a significant issue in the school and they expressed confidence that any instances would be dealt with fairly and effectively. In recent years, a handful of bullying incidents have been logged each year: the records indicate prompt, appropriate and effective action taken.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11, and NMS 6 and 8]

The premises are well maintained, with keypads on external doors. Boarding accommodation is securely separated from the rest of the school. Suitable measures are taken to ensure the general health and safety of the pupils. Science laboratories and the design and technology workshop are locked when no adult is present, with sharp tools and knives being locked away in a designated cupboard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14, and NMS 8 and 15]

Pupils are well supervised. Written arrangements for supervision are appropriately structured for the different age groups within the school. Pupils interviewed confirmed that there is always a strong staff presence throughout the day, and that in the boarding accommodation they are closely supervised, always having access to a member of staff at night in case of need.

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

The sample of risk assessments scrutinised during the inspection, such as those for the design and technology department were appropriate and detailed, covering all pertinent aspects of the matter under consideration.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33, and NMS 18]

The written complaints procedure complies with regulatory requirements. Records of complaints show that they are dealt with promptly and carefully, with action taken as appropriate, including for those relating to boarding.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

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.