



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

ST BEDE'S SCHOOL
REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

17 TO 18 MAY 2016



School's Details

Full Name of School/College	St Bede's School
DfE Number	860/6001
Address	St Bede's School Bishton Hall Wolseley Bridge Stafford Staffordshire ST17 0XN
Telephone Number	01889 881277
Email Address	admin@saintbedes.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Charles Stafford Northcote
Chair of Proprietors	Mr Hugh Stafford Northcote
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	92
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (48 boys; 44 girls)
Number of day pupils	Total: 74
Number of boarders	Total: 18
	Full: 16
Early Years Foundation Stage	12
Pupils' Ability	The school does not use standardised tests. However, its own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above the national average.
Pupils' Needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is ten. Three have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. They require support with their learning and physical mobility. Thirteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), twelve of whom receive support for their English.
History of the School	The school was founded in 1936 as a boys' prep school by the grandparents of the current headmaster. It moved to its present site, Bishton Hall, in 1946.

School's Details

Ownership and Governing Structure	The school is a limited company. The directors are all members of the Stafford Northcote family and are jointly responsible for the governance of the school.
School Structure	St Bede's comprises three sections. Children attend the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) between the ages of three and five years. The Lower School is for pupils aged six to eight years, and the Upper School comprises those aged nine to thirteen years.
Inspection Dates	17 to 18 May 2016

About the Inspection

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards (“the standards”) in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school’s accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (“boarding NMS”). It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards, including the boarding NMS, following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school’s compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework to the Early Years Foundation Stage and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

The school uses its own framework to determine attainment.

The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupil performance is in place.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1 - 4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.

The standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable and provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place. Boarders do not experience discrimination, and their care is sensitive to different needs.

An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 6, 9, 10 and 13 - 16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2 - 4, 6.3, 7.2, 8 - 10, 12, 15 and 16 are met but those in paragraphs 7, 8, 11, 12 and in NMS 6.1, 6.2, 7.1 and 11 are not met.

Some arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils do not pay due regard to current statutory guidance. Recruitment checks for some staff have not been appropriately undertaken prior to appointment, including the required checks of references and previous employment history. The school has not taken steps to ensure that staff who work with children in early years or provide childcare for later years (under 8s) are not disqualified from childcare, either personally or by association.

The school lacks an effective strategic approach to health and safety and does not fully comply with some health and safety requirements such as those relating to the maintenance of electrical equipment in a safe condition. Gas safety certificates were not available to demonstrate that appropriate checks had been conducted.

The school does not fully comply with fire safety regulations. The appointed competent person does not have sufficient training, experience and knowledge in taking preventative and protection measures for fire safety and to ensure that any risks identified by external services are promptly rectified.

Action point 1

- **the school must take steps to ensure that those who work with children in the early years or provide childcare for children in the "later years" (under the age of 8) are not disqualified from childcare under the Childcare Act 2006, either personally or by association, and pay due regard to current regulatory guidance concerning recruitment procedures for staff in relation to references and employment history, [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b), and NMS 11]**

Action point 2

- **the school must ensure that health and safety laws are complied with by effectively implementing the health and safety policy, ensuring that all appropriate safety checks are undertaken. [paragraph 11, and NMS 6.1 and 6.2]**

Action point 3

- **the school must ensure that it complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by taking prompt action on the deficiencies in fire safety, and ensuring that training is sufficient for the roles undertaken. [paragraph 12, and NMS 7.1]**

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of proprietors and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 17, 18(2)(a) and (d), 19, 20, 21(2), 21(3)(a)(i), (ii), (iv) – (vii) and 21(7), and NMS 14 are met but those in paragraph 18(2)(b),(c)(ii) and 18(3) [checks on prohibitions from teaching and management and medical fitness] and consequently in paragraph 21(3)(a)(iii) , 21(3)(b) and NMS 14.1 are not met.

The school does not meet some of the regulatory requirements regarding recruitment checks. Checks of medical fitness and relating to prohibition orders for teachers and leaders have not been undertaken prior to appointment. The register of staff appointments does not detail the full information regarding the rectifying of historical discrepancies and contains inconsistencies in information recording, including the full date for existing checks. The school was only able to rectify a small minority of the discrepancies by the end of the inspection.

Action point 4

- **the school must ensure that prohibition order and medical fitness checks are undertaken on staff before appointment and recorded accurately on the register of staff appointments. [paragraphs 18(2)(b) and 18(c)(ii) and 21(3)(a)(iii) and (b), and NMS 14.1]**

PART 5

Premises of and accommodation at schools

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. Acoustics and lighting are appropriate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

The standards relating to the premises and accommodation in paragraphs 22 – 24, 26 – 29 and 31, and NMS 5.1 – 5.3 and 5.5 – 5.8 are met but those in paragraphs 25, 30 and NMS 5.4 are not met.

The school has not undertaken a check to assess legionella risk for water supplies.

Action point 5

- **the school must ensure that the premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety requirements by carrying out a legionella risk assessment. [paragraphs 25, 30 and NMS 5.4]**

PART 6

Provision of information

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with Education, Health and Care plans or English as an Additional Language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

The standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

The standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The standards relating to leadership and management of the school and boarding in NMS 13.2, 13.6 and 13.7 are met but those in paragraph 34 and NMS 13.1, 13.3-13.5, 13.8, 13.9 are not met.

Leadership and management do not demonstrate sufficient skills and knowledge, and do not fulfil their responsibilities effectively to ensure that the Independent School Standards are met consistently. Consequently they do not actively promote the well-being of pupils. Monitoring by the school's leadership and management has not ensured the effectiveness of the boarding and welfare provision. Records are not suitably maintained and monitored, and appropriate action is not taken.

Action point 6

- **the school must ensure that leadership and management acquire the skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Independent School Standards Regulations and the National Minimum Standards for boarding are met consistently, thus actively promoting the well-being of pupils. [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c), and NMS 13.1, 13.3 - 13.5, 13.8 and 13.9]**

About the inspection

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the proprietors. They attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Sue Bennett	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Laura Brown	Compliance Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Chris Wright	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head, IAPS school)