

HEMDEAN HOUSE SCHOOL

Hemdean Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7SD

4TH NOVEMBER 2016

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hemdean House School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged from three to eleven. The school is located on the outskirts of Caversham; it is set in its own grounds, occupying purpose-built accommodation which has been significantly extended since its foundation in 1859. The school became an educational trust in 1972 and is governed by a board of trustees, the School Council. The Early Years Foundation Stage and school are all on the same site and operate as a single unit. At the time of the visit, there were 76 pupils on roll, 44 of whom were girls and 32 were boys. Seventeen pupils are in the EYFS. There are 19 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom three are provided with additional support. Sixteen pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and receive learning support. One has an educational, health and care (EHC) plan. The previous Integrated inspection by ISI was in December 2015.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This was an announced visit at the request of the Department for Education to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the Integrated inspection of December 2015. The focus of the visit was on fire safety (Part 3) and the quality of leadership and management (Part 8). In addition, the visit checked the school's safeguarding policy (Part 3) and check that the safeguarding policy is published on the school's website or otherwise made available (Part 6).

INSPECTION FINDINGS

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

The school meets the Regulation.

The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. The departure of key staff in the summer has necessitated training the new designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL, as set out in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016 (KCSIE). They have, as yet, been unable to secure places on the suitable courses organised by the local authority. However, they have undertaken online training, and show an excellent knowledge of current protocols. The position is further secured by the appointment of a governor with up to date DSL training. Staff have received up to date training and are clear about thresholds and procedures for referral.

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

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.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12]

The school meets the Regulation.

The school has fully implemented the required actions of the fire safety report to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Considerable capital work has been undertaken to ensure buildings are alarmed and provided with emergency lighting. The fire prevention policy includes procedures to be taken to reduce the risk of fire. Staff have been trained in evacuation procedures and the use of extinguishers, and further training is planned to increase the number of fire marshals on site. Evacuation procedures have been carefully considered, and records show that in drills, evacuation is rapid. Staff and pupils are aware of the action to be taken in the event of a fire. Emergency exits are kept clear and are signposted. All records are up to date, and checks are undertaken by a competent person.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (1) (a), (b) and (c)]

The school meets the Regulation.

A new governing body and interim head were appointed in July 2016. In the short time since their appointment, they have demonstrated good skills and knowledge, fulfilled their responsibilities to ensure that the Independent School Standards are met, and have actively promoted the well-being of pupils. They have invested to ensure that the school now meets the requirements of fire regulations. The governors have strengthened strategic oversight of finance, buildings and the quality of education. They provide good support for the school in its period of transition. The school development plan has been well researched and focuses on the achievement and personal development of pupils. The very recent appointment of a governor with an educational background enables the board to exert a more informed oversight on the school, and in particular its safeguarding arrangements. An annual review of safeguarding was carried out last year. The governors have discussed and signed off the safeguarding policy, which is now in line with the requirements of the latest KCSIE. They are actively seeking to outsource the management of the school's finance and human resources and hence strengthen the monitoring of the school's compliance with regulations.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

The school meets all of the relevant requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.