

STOKE COLLEGE

Ashen Lane, Stoke-by-Clare, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 8JE

28 JUNE 2017

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stoke College is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged from 5 to 16 years. Founded in 1951, it moved to its current location near Sudbury, in Suffolk in 1954. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. Pupils aged from 4 to 11 years attend the prep school, and those from 11 to 16 are part of the senior school. The school offers flexible weekday and weekly boarding for pupils aged nine or over.

At the time of the visit there were 116 pupils on roll, 66 boys and 50 girls. Eighteen of these board for one or more nights. The school has identified 47 pupils as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); two have education, health and care (EHC) plans, and four have statements of educational need. Three pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive additional support.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This is an unannounced visit carried out at the request of the DfE to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following a regulatory compliance inspection in October 2016. The focus of the visit was on safeguarding; health and safety; fire prevention; risk assessment; premises and accommodation; boarders' contact with their parents and family; and the quality of leadership and management.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b); 8 (a) and (b); NMS 11]; Provision of information to parents [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32 (1) (c)]

The school meets the regulations and standard.

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.

The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding, which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. It has regard to the most recent statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 (KCSIE) (September 2016)*. The policy identifies a governor with responsibility for the oversight of safeguarding, and is further supported by suitable guidance covering the safe recruitment of staff, whistleblowing, a staff code of conduct and information on how pupils are educated about online safety.

This policy is implemented effectively. Safeguarding procedures are well managed in line with the local authority guidance, ensuring the welfare of both day and boarding pupils. Appropriate procedures are in place to support pupils in need. There are suitable arrangements for listening to pupils. Detailed child protection records are held securely with the required confidentiality. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and her deputy have recent safeguarding training, including inter-agency training, provided by the local authority.

All other staff receive regular safeguarding training, which includes the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. They have a strong understanding of their responsibilities and are aware of how to refer concerns. They understand that anyone can make a referral to the children's services. New staff have undergone suitable induction training. All staff have received a copy of KCSIE Part 1, which includes Annex A. They sign to say that they have read and understood this. Staff report that they receive informal updates from the DSL and additional on-line training to confirm their understanding of procedures. Appropriate records of staff training are maintained. There have been no recent incidents, but staff understand the need to report any allegations against staff to the Disqualification and Barring Service (DBS) and/or National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL).

Pupils report that they feel happy and safe in school and would feel confident to report any concerns to their tutor, boarding staff, or to other members of staff. Pupils confirm they are taught about safe internet and social media use and how to report any issues which arise.

The safeguarding governor visits regularly, conducts a safeguarding audit, and reports back to the main board, together with the DSL. Governors formally review the school's policy and arrangements annually.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety, prevention of fire and risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 11, 12 and 16 and consequently paragraph 8(a) and (b); NMS 3.2, 4.1, 6, 7.1, 15.9]

The school meets the regulations and standards.

Health and safety procedures throughout the school are managed efficiently. Since the previous inspection, the school has commissioned a specialist external company to review its health and safety, fire and risk management procedures. There are detailed health and safety audits twice each year, and action points are identified and followed up and remedial actions are clearly recorded. This process is monitored by both the school's own health and safety committee and also by the governors, who carry out a site tour every term. Plant servicing and safety checks are carried out at appropriate intervals. Staff report that the school acts promptly when issues are identified and commented on the conscientious approach of the maintenance team. There is safe storage of hazardous materials, such as cleaning products or substances within science laboratories.

Well-maintained records, monitored by the governing body, reveal that the school scrutinises fire safety closely, and the fire risk assessment is up to date. Fire evacuation plans are in place, and appropriate fire drills have been undertaken and carefully logged. The issues highlighted in the previous inspection have been addressed. There are clearly signed and lit exit routes and regular tests of fire alarms and lighting. Staff are regularly reminded about the need to keep fire exits clear.

The school safeguards and promotes the welfare of pupils by drawing up and effectively implementing a written risk assessment policy. Appropriate action is taken to reduce risks which are identified across all areas of the school's activity. Staff training regarding keeping pupils safe is effective; they understand what is required and follow the expected procedures, including the implementation of risk assessments for visits and outings.

Suitable accommodation is available to cater for the needs of boarders and day pupils who are sick or injured, including overnight if required. It is near to a toilet, and has a basin. Appropriate separation is possible for male and female pupils if required.

Additional new boarding accommodation is nearing completion, ready for use in September 2017, and the current accommodation is also being reorganised and refurbished. There is currently adequate staff accommodation, with appropriately separated washing and shower facilities, which will be replaced by new accommodation which provides en-suite facilities for residential staff. Provision to ensure the privacy of pupils whilst showering and washing has been improved, and pupils report that they are satisfied with the new arrangements. The new boarding house also provides suitable washroom and shower facilities.

The school has purchased additional wireless phones and provides suitable opportunities for pupils to contact their family and friends in privacy. In interviews, boarders expressed their satisfaction with these arrangements.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 24(1)(a) and (b), 25, 27 (b), 30 and consequently paragraph 8(a) and (b); NMS 5.3, 5.4]

The school meets the regulations and standards.

Effective maintenance procedures ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare. The maintenance and site issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed. Staff can now directly email maintenance requests or highlight any problems to the support staff. There is a daily meeting to identify and prioritise tasks. The site is suitably lit, and appropriate procedures are in place to identify and rectify any deficiencies.

Boarding accommodation meets the needs of the pupils. Washing and shower facilities provide appropriate privacy for pupils and there is suitable accommodation for the medical examination and care of sick or injured pupils.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34(1)(a) (b) and (c) and NMS 13.1, 13.3, 13.4 and 13.5 and 13.8]

The school meets the regulations and standards.

The governing body ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, fulfil their responsibilities effectively, and actively promote the well-being of pupils. The school has implemented its action plan effectively, so that the previous issues have been remedied. It has also revised its health and safety, fire prevention and maintenance procedures in order to prevent a recurrence. Governors monitor these aspects of the school's operations with care, and are in regular contact with senior staff in order to address issues and concerns which might occur in the future.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

The school meets all of the relevant requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and no further action is required.