

HERITAGE SCHOOL

17 – 19 Brookside, Cambridge, CB2 1JE

14 MARCH 2018

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Heritage School is a co-educational day school in the centre of Cambridge. Founded in 2007 as a school for pupils aged from four to seven years, it increased in size year by year and, by 2015, it educated pupils from the age of four through to sixteen years. The school is a charitable trust whose trustees act as the school's governing body. At the time of the visit, there were 198 pupils in the school, 105 boys and 93 girls. Of these, 16 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Reception class. Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and the school provides support for 43 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has English as an additional language (EAL). The school received a regulatory compliance inspection in May 2017.

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 regulatory compliance inspection in May 2017. The focus of the visit was on the *Keeping Children Safe in Education* recruitment aspects of safeguarding and the quality of leadership and management.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

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

The school does not meet the requirements.

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.

Although the policy document has regard to *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, it is not fully implemented in practice. Since the previous inspection, the school has ensured that, in most respects, its practice has continued to actively promote pupils' well-being and welfare. Staff joining the school recently have received appropriate induction in safeguarding matters and have read and understood the various documents issued. They have received a briefing from the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and have completed on-line training modules in child protection, child neglect, bullying, and the Prevent strategy. The specialist training for the DSL and his deputy remains up to date.

The school has made insufficient progress since the previous inspection in developing a fully efficient and rigorous approach to staff recruitment. The single central register of staff appointments (SCR) was scrutinised for those staff joining the school since the previous inspection. In several cases, staff have been permitted to start work before the receipt of references. Little attempt has been made to chase up late references although, in one or

two cases, supervision has been put in place. Several staff started work without a barred list check being carried out. The school was not aware that this was required if the DBS disclosure was delayed or if accepting a DBS disclosure from a previous employer under the 'three-month rule'. The SCR is not kept systematically – for example, the school has chosen to record some medical fitness checks but not others. No senior staff, including the head or governors, monitor the SCR and the recruitment process. As a result, they do not have an efficient system for preventing staff from starting work when relevant checks are still outstanding. Apart from these omissions, all other required pre-employment checks for recent staff have been completed before they started work.

Staff interviewed demonstrated their correct understanding of the referral process for concerns about a child or an allegation against a member of staff. They understood that anyone can make a referral to the local authority. They showed an appropriate awareness of the importance of listening to pupils, not asking leading questions and not promising confidentiality. Update training for existing staff is suitably recorded by the office manager. A group of pupils joining the school since the previous inspection were interviewed and indicated that they had settled in well, thanks to the support and friendship of their peers, and the personalised care and attention given to them by approachable staff. Although pupils are not allowed to bring internet-enabled mobile devices into school, they are aware of the risks inherent in social media contact and internet abuse.

The school has not identified any welfare concerns since the previous inspection but continues to work with local children's services on an on-going case to support a child suffering from adverse domestic circumstances.

Governors are aware of safeguarding matters in the school through a standing item on each of their six meetings each year, although they have not yet nominated one of their number to hold specific responsibility for safeguarding. Review of safeguarding takes place at every meeting, and the school is now aware of the need to record formally at one of these meetings that governors have carried out their required formal annual review.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4 paragraphs 18 to 21]

The school meets the regulations.

Although not all checks have been carried out before new member of staff have started work, as noted above, the remaining pre-employment checks indicate that staff, supply staff and proprietors are suitable to work with children. On the sample of SCR entries scrutinised, the required pre-employment checks have been completed, except for the one barred list check still outstanding, which was carried out during the visit. The dates of the checks carried out are recorded on the SCR as required.

Leadership and management of schools [ISSR Part 8 paragraph 34(1)(a) and (b)]

The school does not meet the regulations.

Although the school actively promotes the well-being of pupils in nearly all respects, it has made insufficient progress in achieving a rigorous and fully compliant recruitment process. Staff lack, in some respects, a full knowledge of what is required, and the recruitment process and SCR have not been carefully monitored. This has resulted in some staff starting work before all required checks have been completed.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

The school does not meet all of the relevant requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, Health and Safety, paragraph 7 (a) and (b)

- Ensure that references have been received and all staff undergo a barred list check before starting work in the school.

ISSR Part 8 Leadership and management of schools, paragraph 34(1)(a) and (b)

- Ensure that all relevant staff have the necessary skill and knowledge to implement an efficient and rigorous recruitment process.
- Ensure that the recruitment process is efficiently monitored to prevent staff from starting work before all required checks have been completed.