



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Exeter School

March 2023

School's details

School	Exeter School			
DfE number	878/6033			
Registered charity number	1093080			
Address	Exeter School Victoria Park Road Exeter Devon EX2 4NS			
Telephone number	01392 307080			
Email address	head@exeterschool.org.uk			
Head	Ms Louise Simpson			
Chair of governors	Mr James Gaisford			
Proprietor	Exeter School			
Age range	7 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	959			
	Juniors	195	Seniors	545
	Sixth Form	219		
Date of inspection	27 March 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Exeter School is an independent co-educational day school. It is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. The school consists of the junior school, for pupils aged 7 to 11; the senior school for those aged 11 to 16; and the sixth form. The school has 261 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 26 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance and educational quality inspection in December 2021, followed by a progress monitoring visit in September 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase the total number of pupils from 930 to 1000 pupils. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs).

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 – 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietor)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 – 29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 Implementation of all aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support for pupils. The school's arrangements are likely to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- 2.5 The school's procedures reflect fully the content of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022*. They are implemented effectively to safeguard children at risk and those in need. Suitable arrangements are in place for listening to pupils and for liaising with parents and external agencies when required. Pupils say that they feel safe and are confident that staff will take prompt and appropriate action to address any concerns they might have. That this happens in practice was confirmed by the scrutiny of safeguarding records, which are comprehensive, and during discussions with pupils. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs work successfully as a team. They are supported by governors and leaders who have worked effectively towards further refining the school's arrangements for pastoral care. Pupils receive suitable guidance on staying safe and understand how to stay safe online. The use of technology in the school is monitored appropriately. Appropriate procedures are in place for handling concerns relating to child-on-child abuse and allegations against adults working in the school, including low-level concerns. The mental health of pupils is given a particularly high priority.
- 2.6 Staff, including those with leadership responsibility for safeguarding, are suitably trained. Records are systematically kept and show that the training for all staff is current, appropriate and in line with local requirements. Staff say that they feel suitably equipped to deal with any concerns that are raised. On joining the school, new members of staff receive appropriate induction in safeguarding. Those members of staff interviewed demonstrated a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities and of the staff code of conduct and whistleblowing policy. Staff share and record concerns diligently and know that they can make a direct referral to children's services if necessary. They have a clear understanding of current definitions of abuse and recognise the vulnerability of pupils with protected characteristics, including those with SEND. Staff confirm that they are aware of the procedures necessary to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse and recognise the possibility that such abuse may be taking place without being reported.
- 2.7 Effective procedures are implemented to ensure that appropriate and timely checks are made to confirm the suitability of staff. Governors exercise suitable oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements and are trained appropriately in safeguarding. Oversight is maintained through an annual review of policy and procedures, in addition to regular monitoring of safeguarding arrangements, including recruitment checks.

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

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.

- 2.9 The proprietor ensures that the school complies with relevant health and safety laws by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy. Systematic records show that utilities, plant and equipment are tested on a regular basis. There are effective avenues for staff to report concerns about health and safety issues. These enable trends to be identified and risks to be mitigated. Current arrangements indicate that the school is likely to continue to meet the standard when the pupil roll is increased.

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

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 The school has a suitable fire safety policy which includes the elimination of risks from dangerous substances. Fire risk assessments of the premises have been undertaken by a suitably qualified external consultant and any recommendations have been addressed promptly. Procedures to be followed in the event of a fire are well understood by staff and pupils, and training is thorough and effective. Termly fire drills are carried out and recorded. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 Pupils are appropriately supervised through the effective deployment of staff. Current arrangements indicate that the school is likely to continue to meet the standard when the pupil roll is increased.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standard.
- 2.15 The school's risk assessment policy clearly describes the roles and responsibilities of staff in identifying and mitigating risk. Appropriate and suitably thorough risk assessments are drawn up for all areas of the site, in-school activities and trips and visits. The needs of individual pupils are also taken into account where safeguarding or other risks are identified. The school takes external advice on the suitability of its risk assessments and appropriate critical incident planning is undertaken. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.16 The school meets the standards.
- 2.17 All the required checks are undertaken on staff, governors, contractors and volunteers before they take up their posts. The school does not employ supply staff. A register is kept as required and all appointments are accurately and fully recorded. These arrangements suggest that the school is likely to continue to meet the standards when pupil numbers increase.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–29]

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety. Acoustics and lighting are

appropriate and water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. The current provision is likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.20 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.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

2.21 The school meets the standard.

2.22 School leaders and governors demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school standards are consistently met, and the wellbeing of the pupils is actively promoted. Operational planning for the proposed increase in numbers is strategic and comprehensive.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

3.1 It is recommended that the material change be approved.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors. He visited different areas of the school and talked with a group of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mr Stephen Fox

Reporting inspector