



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Langley School

July 2021

School's details

School College	Langley School		
DfE number	926/6005		
Registered charity number	311270		
Address	Langley School Langley Park Loddon Norfolk NR14 6BJ		
Telephone number	01508 520210		
Email address	office@langleschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Perriss		
Chair of governors	Lt Col Mark Nicholas		
Age range	10 to 18		
Number of pupils on roll	431		
	Day pupils	366	Boarders 65
	Juniors Year 6	9	
	Seniors Years 7 to 11	286	Sixth Form Years 12 to 13 136
Date of visit	1 to 2 July 2021		

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Langley School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 10 and 18. It is located in a rural setting 11 miles south east of the city of Norwich. The school is a registered charity whose trustees form the board of governors. It has a junior section for pupils in Year 6, a senior section for those in Years 7 to 11 and a sixth form. Around one-fifth of pupils board in one of the two all-age boarding houses, one for male pupils, and one for female pupils. The school has 166 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. Five pupils have an education, health and care plan. Twelve pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in January 2020. Langley also has a separate nursery, pre-prep and prep school situated in Taverham. These parts of the school were not inspected.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an unannounced additional inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015. The inspection was asked to focus specifically on the school's provision for, and implementation and teaching of, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) excluding other curricular areas.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraph 2 (quality of education provided - curriculum)	Met
Part 1, paragraph 2(A) (relationships and sex education)	Met
Part 1, paragraph 3 (teaching)	Not Met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	Not Met
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	Met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour); NMS 12	Not Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 15	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	Not Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum, and relationships and sex education [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2 and 2(A)]

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 During the current academic year, the school has an effective programme for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) following recent revision. The scheme of work for PSHE also includes all of the requirements outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance for relationships and sex education (RSE). The recently revised policy for RSE is available to parents on the school's website. In drawing up the policy and the scheme of work, the two PSHE co-ordinators have consulted parents, pupils and staff, and taken their views into consideration. The scheme seeks to enable pupils to gain knowledge and understanding, to acquire personal and social skills and to develop positive attitudes and values. It is designed so that topics are revisited in subsequent years in order to build up deeper understanding.
- 2.3 Lessons in PSHE are taught as part of the regular timetable throughout the school, including the sixth form, and key elements of the programme are reinforced through assemblies and tutorials. Each unit of work has specific learning objectives and opportunities for assessment related to these objectives. The scheme of work takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils and does not undermine the fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It endeavours to prepare pupils effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. The scheme reflects the school's aims, encourages respect for other people and pays particular regard to the protected characteristics which are set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.4 In order to support staff who teach PSHE, the subject co-ordinators have provided a suitable, comprehensive bank of teaching material. These draw appropriately on those provided by professional organisations whose work is devoted to the teaching of PSHE. The co-ordinators are responsive to feedback from pupils and staff as to the suitability of the materials and have implemented changes during the course of the year to align materials more effectively to the needs and experience of the pupils.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.5 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.6 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

- 2.7 The school meets the standards.
- 2.8 The school's safeguarding policy meets the requirements of current legislation and guidance and is implemented effectively. It is supplemented by additional policies which outline the code of conduct for staff, whistleblowing procedures and the steps to be taken to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. The safeguarding policy stresses the importance of listening to pupils and provides helpful guidance to staff. Pupils confirmed that they are listened to and receive a response when they raise concerns.
- 2.9 Over the last two years, the school has strengthened the leadership of safeguarding and now has an appropriate structure and capacity to deal with safeguarding issues and to promote the welfare of pupils. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL), who is a member of the school's leadership team, is

now supported by five deputy DSLs, each of whom is located in a strategic area of the school. The safeguarding team meets weekly to discuss safeguarding issues, and their work is supported by the pastoral committee which also meets weekly. The work of the safeguarding team confirms oversight and support from governors. The identification of issues relating to the use of the internet has improved so that measures for internet safety are effective; any potentially dangerous situations are now identified and reported immediately to the DSL. Pupils understand how to stay safe online.

- 2.10 The school liaises as required with local agencies and the police. It takes prompt action if concerns are expressed about a child or allegations are made about a member of staff. Staff understand that anyone can make a referral to children's services. The DSL and safeguarding team have clear and suitable understanding of thresholds and when to make a referral or seek advice.
- 2.11 All members of the safeguarding team and the headmaster have received the appropriate level of safeguarding training within the last two years. Training for all other staff is thorough, and records are kept which show that all staff have received the required training. Recent training has involved how to raise safeguarding concerns, peer-on-peer abuse, sexual violence and harassment, children missing from education and safe practices when teaching remotely. All staff have read Part 1 and Annex A of the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. Staff understanding of safeguarding is checked at the end of training sessions, and any deficiencies are rectified. There are thorough induction procedures for new staff, who have to complete online safeguarding and Prevent training courses. The DSL also meets with each new member of staff to inform them of the school's safeguarding procedures and how to make a referral. Pupils are also informed about the work of the school's safeguarding team, and posters throughout the school remind them of who the DSLs are.
- 2.12 As a result of training, staff and pupils are fully aware of what to do if they have concerns. Both staff and pupils are prepared to report serious concerns to the DSL. Records show that this happens in practice and that such concerns are handled appropriately. The school provides appropriate support for pupils who are on the safeguarding register.
- 2.13 Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the school has taken all necessary precautions to ensure, as far as possible, the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff. Parents, pupils and staff have been kept fully informed about the school's procedures through regular updates on the school's website.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 12] and for the same reasons, Quality of education – teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 3] and Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.14 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.15 The school has an appropriate written behaviour policy which sets out the standards it expects of pupils, a system of rewards for when pupils reach these standards, and the sanctions to be adopted in the event of misbehaviour. The policy, which was introduced at the start of the school year, aims to promote good behaviour, self-discipline and respect, and to encourage all members of the school community to adopt positive attitudes and values which include kindness, confidence, integrity and curiosity.
- 2.16 However, the policy is not implemented effectively as the culture of the school does not reflect the positive attitudes and values which the policy seeks to instil. Hence, the school does not meet the standard for behaviour. For similar reasons, the school does not currently meet the standard for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because the requirements to promote fundamental British values, to enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong, to accept responsibility for their behaviour and to encourage respect for other people, including those with different faiths and beliefs, are not implemented effectively.

- 2.17 During the inspection, governors, and staff with responsibility for behaviour and pupils' personal development acknowledged that standards of behaviour require improvement. Pupils' views support this view. The general consensus amongst the school's leaders and staff is that the majority of pupils are well behaved and display appropriate attitudes and values. Inspection evidence supports this view. Inspectors found that a minority of pupils do not reflect these attitudes and values, and this is acknowledged by school leaders and staff. These pupils show a lack of respect and kindness towards others and use inappropriate and offensive language which is often hurtful and degrading to other pupils. In their discussions with inspectors, female pupils said they are particularly offended by the sexualised comments made by some male pupils; similarly, male pupils said that some female pupils are equally disrespectful in the language that they use towards male pupils. The views expressed in discussion with inspectors were also replicated in the responses to inspection questionnaires, in which over a fifth of the staff felt that pupils do not display positive behaviour and attitudes towards others, and two-fifths of the pupils felt that pupils do not treat each other with respect.
- 2.18 The governing body and the school's senior leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve the underlying culture of the school, but these have yet to prove fully effective. A number of staff commented that they have noticed improvement in behaviour over the last two years, but that the improvements are not yet sufficient, nor fully embedded. Inspection evidence supports this view. All staff agree, however, that the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have hindered progress in dealing with behavioural issues and, in some cases, have exacerbated them.
- 2.19 Although the behaviour policy outlines clear procedures for rewards and sanctions, staff are not consistent in the way these are administered. At times, inappropriate language or comments are not noticed or dealt with by staff; they are either ignored or excused as 'banter' or, in the case of indiscipline by male pupils, passed off with comments such as 'boys will be boys.' On occasions, staff will reprimand a pupil, but then do not use the school's procedures for recording such incidents. As a result, the school's behaviour records provide an incomplete picture of the extent of the problem. In discussion, pupils expressed concern at the inconsistency with which rewards and sanctions are given and said they feel the system is too complex.
- 2.20 The school's comprehensive programme for PSHE and RSE seeks to address the behavioural and other issues identified in inspection evidence, but has not yet been successful in instilling positive attitudes amongst all pupils. Half of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that they learn little in their RSE lessons and that these lessons lack interest. In discussion, pupils said that some staff convey little enthusiasm for teaching the materials provided; school leaders confirmed that some staff only teach the subject because they have spare capacity on their timetable. Over half of the staff who teach PSHE responded in the questionnaire that they felt insufficient time is devoted to the teaching of relationships and sex education. Although some is planned for the coming academic year, staff have received little training in the teaching of PSHE and RSE. Because the teaching in these areas does not have a positive impact as demonstrated in consistently improved behaviour, it is judged that the school does not meet the standard for teaching. This judgement applies to the teaching of PSHE and RSE only and not to the teaching of other subjects.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10]

- 2.21 The school meets the standards.
- 2.22 The school has an appropriate policy for bullying which sets out clearly the measures the school takes to prevent bullying in the first instance and to deal with it, should it occur. This is implemented effectively. Staff and pupils fully understand their responsibility for reporting any instances of bullying, and records show that this happens in practice. Resolution of bullying incidents involves discussion with both perpetrator and victim, and parents of all parties are kept informed. The school is fully aware

that such incidents may become safeguarding issues and may necessitate the involvement of the police or the local authority's children's services. Those with designated responsibilities understand the thresholds for such referrals.

- 2.23 Records indicate that bullying incidents certainly occur within the school but that they are taken seriously and, generally, are dealt with effectively. All bullying instances are recorded using dedicated software for that purpose. Records contain sufficient detail, although further information would be helpful in some instances once investigations are complete and action has been taken.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 15]

- 2.24 The school meets the standards.
- 2.25 The school has adequate arrangements for the supervision of pupils within lessons, as they move around the school and at breaks and lunchtimes. There are sufficient staff to supervise boarders.
- 2.26 The number of staff on duty has increased under COVID-19 to ensure that year group bubbles can be maintained and supervised at the same time. Members of staff are always present in areas where there are nearly always pupils, such as the art department, the library and the medical centre. Suitable arrangements have been implemented for supervision in the sixth-form area.
- 2.27 Under normal circumstances, prefects play an important role in supervising pupils and receive training in how to carry out this role.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 6]

- 2.28 The school meets the standards.
- 2.29 The school has an appropriate policy for risk assessment and ensures that risk assessments are drawn up for areas of the school and specific activities which might pose a risk to pupils.
- 2.30 The school has assessed the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic appropriately and has implemented effective measures to manage on-line teaching, teaching within the classroom, movement around the school, and break and lunchtime arrangements in order to ensure, as far as possible, the health and safety of staff and pupils.

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

- 2.31 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; NMS 13]

- 2.32 The school does not meet the standard.
- 2.33 The governing body has made clear to senior leaders that it wants the underlying culture of the school and the behaviour of the pupils to improve. Whilst progress has been made in this direction, governors acknowledge that more still needs to be done.
- 2.34 Whilst acknowledging the good behaviour of the majority of pupils, senior leaders have been very clear in communicating, through assemblies and written communication to staff and pupils, the need for pupils to be more respectful of each other in the way they behave and the language that they use. Such communication has urged change and improvement. Restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have certainly hindered progress in implementing change. It has, for example, not been possible to gather the whole school or the whole staff together to reinforce the messages that have

been given. Pupils have been restricted to their own year group bubbles and have not experienced the positive influence of older, more responsible pupils. They have also experienced frustration as many of the normal activities of a busy boarding school life have been curbed. As a result, heads of year have noticed a deterioration in standards of behaviour and the increasing influence of the less desirable aspects of social media. In order to protect staff and pupils from too much movement around the school, routine monitoring of the quality of teaching has not happened, with the result that the teaching of the new PSHE and RSE programme has not been fully effective.

- 2.35 Despite the impetus for change and some improvement, not enough has been done to ensure consistently good behaviour of pupils throughout the school; nor has it been ensured that the school's expectations with regard to behaviour are applied consistently by all staff. Those with leadership and management responsibility, including in boarding, have not demonstrated the necessary skills and knowledge or fulfilled their responsibilities effectively so that all of the independent school standards are met consistently. They have not ensured that the well-being of pupils is actively promoted at all times.

3. Regulatory action points

3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 1, Quality of education – teaching, paragraph 3

- The school must ensure that all staff involved in the teaching of PSHE and RSE have sufficient training to enable them to use the planned resources effectively and to motivate the pupils so that they make good progress in their personal and social development [paragraph 3(a), (b), (c) and (e)].

ISSR Part 2, Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, paragraph 5

- The school must ensure that its efforts and stated intentions to promote tolerance, harmony and respect for other people are fulfilled effectively and that all staff are consistent in promoting these aims [paragraph 5(a), 5b(ii), (iii) and (vi)].

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety – behaviour, paragraph 9; NMS 12

- The school must ensure that its written behaviour policy is implemented effectively to promote good behaviour and lead to the elimination of poor behaviour; in particular that all staff follow the school's procedures for recording behavioural incidents; that these records are monitored and analysed to identify progress in improving pupils' behaviour; and that those aspects which require further improvement are identified and acted upon [paragraph 9(b); NMS 12].

ISSR Part 8, Leadership and management, paragraph 34; NMS 13

- The school must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities use their skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively to promote the well-being of pupils and to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.3 to 13.5].

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the headmaster, senior leaders and other members of staff and met remotely with the chair of the governing body and a safeguarding governor. They talked with different groups of pupils from all of the year groups that were present in school at the time of the inspection. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies. Inspectors also considered the responses to questionnaires and written comments from parents, pupils and staff.