



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Report for an Additional Inspection**

**Stowe School**

**September 2021**

## School's details

<b>School</b>	Stowe School			
<b>DfE number</b>	825/6001			
<b>Address</b>	Stowe Buckingham Buckinghamshire MK18 5EH			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01280 818000			
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@stowe.co.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Dr Anthony Wallersteiner			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Simon Creedy Smith			
<b>Age range</b>	13 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	893			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	235	<b>Boarders</b>	658
	<b>Lower school</b>	499	<b>Upper school</b>	394
<b>Date of visit</b>	7 September 2021			

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Stowe School is an independent day and boarding school for male and female pupils, founded in 1923. The school is a charitable trust administered by a governing body. Most pupils are boarders, who are accommodated in one of 13 boarding houses. The school has identified 124 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, 54 of whom receive additional support. No pupil has an educational health care plan. English is an additional language for 106 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a material change inspection in December 2019.

### 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.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 3, 5 and 11	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying); NMS 12	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 15	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6	<b>Met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 31(1)(c) (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	<b>Met</b>

## 2. Inspection findings

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 3, 5 and 11]**

#### **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 standards.
- 2.4 The school implements its safeguarding policy and procedures appropriately to support pupils' needs and welfare. The safeguarding policy and procedures are in line with the current statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2021) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and are supplemented by suitable additional policies for whistleblowing, the code of conduct for staff and mental health. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has recently written and introduced an effective self-harm policy written in conjunction with Buckinghamshire local authority. Medical provision supports any pupil with mental health issues appropriately.
- 2.5 The school manages safeguarding effectively through a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a deputy (DDSL) who is also a school counsellor. They have both received the appropriate level of training within the last two years. They are supported by senior leaders and boarding staff who are also trained to DSL level. Training for all staff, including those new to the school, is up to date with KCSIE 2021 and they are required to demonstrate that they have read and understood both Annexes A and B. Recent training focused particularly on peer-on-peer abuse, sexual violence and harassment and mental health. A sample of staff interviewed demonstrated that they were fully aware of their responsibilities and the reporting procedures with regard to reporting any safeguarding concerns. Staff showed full confidence in the DSL team and reported that leadership and management are always supportive and have promoted a strong and secure safeguarding culture.
- 2.6 Pupils reported that they are very happy in school and feel it is a welcoming and safe environment, including boarding accommodation. Both boarders and day pupils belong to a house that ensures a family atmosphere of mixed ages and acts as a centre for pastoral care. They said they have many people they could go to with a concern but particularly go to their house parents and other house staff or older pupils who act as mentors. Pupils are confident that they will be listened to, will receive a response and that suitable action will be taken.
- 2.7 Evidence indicates that the DSL has a good relationship with the local children services and the LADO and makes referrals promptly and seeks advice when required. The DSL has full authority to act independently with regard to referrals to the local authority and the police, and staff understand that anyone can make a referral. The DSL takes suitable, prompt action if concerns are raised about a child or allegations are made about a member of staff. All concerns are recorded and categorised to identify the nature of the concern and records maintain a suitable level of confidentiality.
- 2.8 The governing body and senior leadership are pro-active in monitoring safeguarding in the school and are helpful when extra support is required. In the last two years and throughout the pandemic, the school became more aware of mental health issues with a small number of pupils and as a result they have increased counselling services and guidance to staff effectively. The school's comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education, and relationships and sex education is addressing fully the education and guidance necessary for pupils to maintain a healthy and respectful

culture in school, particularly with regard to relationships between male and female pupils. In pupil interviews positive attitudes were expressed about the respect that is predominant in pupil relationships.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10; NMS 12]**

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 The school has an appropriate anti-bullying policy which is implemented effectively and includes sufficient guidance for staff on how to deal with bullying if it should occur. The policy includes measures to combat bullying, including on-line sexual abuse, and pupils interviewed were knowledgeable about how to protect themselves from such incidents should they occur. Pupils reported confidence in the senior leadership to deal with any bullying incidents which they believe to be rare. Records of bullying behaviour are kept and show appropriate levels of support and sanctions where necessary.

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

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 Suitable arrangements are made and implemented to supervise both day and boarding pupils. All pupils belong to a house, and they report to house staff throughout the day. Registration takes place in every lesson. There is a full weekend activity programme which is supervised appropriately by staff. Pupils can sign out of houses but must be inside the designated school grounds area where security is on duty.

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

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy which pays close attention to key areas of risk and measures to mitigate identified risks, especially potential risk to vulnerable pupils. Risk assessment is systematic, and documents offer suitable guidance to staff to assess risk effectively and to ensure that there is adequate supervision and monitoring with regards to pupil welfare. A sample of risk assessments for pupils with mental health concerns showed suitable awareness indicators, contact details for concerns. The assessments are consistent with appropriate individual health plans. All vulnerable pupils have an appropriate risk assessment which is monitored by house parents, pastoral staff and overseen by the medical centre.

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

- 2.15 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]**

2.16 The school meets the standards.

2.17 Both the governors, senior leaders, and management at all levels, demonstrate a pro-active approach to maintaining a safe and healthy culture in the school. They constantly review, update, and improve their practice and guidance for staff to ensure the well-being of pupils is actively promoted at all times. The governors have ensured that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively and ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently.

### **3. Regulatory action points**

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this visit, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

## **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 governors. They talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.