



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Material Change Visit

St Edmund's School, Canterbury

May 2022

School's details

School name	St Edmund's School			
DfE number	886/6050			
Registered charity number	1056382			
Address	St Edmund's School St Thomas Hill Canterbury Kent CT2 8HU			
Telephone number	01227 475600			
Email address	info@stedmunds.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Edward O'Connor			
Chair of governors	Air Marshal Christopher Nickols			
Age range	2 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	607			
	Day pupils	481	Boarders	126
	EYFS	40	Juniors	238
	Seniors	224	Sixth Form	105
Date of visit	27 May 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 St. Edmund’s School, Canterbury is an independent day and boarding school. It consists of a nursery and pre-prep for pupils up to Year 2 which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting; a junior department for pupils in Years 3 to 8; and a senior department for pupils in Years 9 to 13. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. Boarding is offered to pupils from the age of ten, in four houses on the school site. The choristers of Canterbury Cathedral, who are educated at the school, live in a separate boarding house in the precincts of the cathedral, which is run by boarding staff from the school.
- 1.2 Day pupils come mostly from the locality, though some travel from farther afield. They are from a wide variety of social backgrounds. Boarders are a diverse community with over twenty nationalities normally represented. There are 239 pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 140 receive additional support. Twelve pupils have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 71 pupils, of whom 47 receive additional support. The school’s previous inspection was a compliance inspection of the pre-prep, junior and senior schools in December 2018.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.3 This was an announced material change visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school’s proposal to increase its number of registered pupils from 600 to 650, including the admission of children aged 2 into the EYFS and increased numbers in the sixth form. The visit focused on the school’s compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 6	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 7	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 15	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 14	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23–30 (premises of and accommodation at schools); NMS 5	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 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 promotes the welfare and safeguarding of pupils effectively, including those with SEND and children in the EYFS. Staff are suitably trained on induction and through regular updates so that they have sufficiently secure knowledge and understanding to enable them to identify and report concerns promptly. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies have undertaken additional training appropriate to their responsibilities. Pupils' well-being is promoted effectively, such as by ready access to a counsellor on site. Where necessary, pupils are referred without delay to local authority safeguarding services, with whom the school maintains a constructive relationship. The advice of the local authority is promptly sought should there be any concerns relating to a member of staff. Staff interviewed showed an effective understanding of the code of conduct for their behaviour and confidence to use the whistleblowing policy should it be necessary. Inspection evidence confirms that safeguarding records are suitably maintained, including those of any instances of racist or sexually inappropriate behaviour as well as for vulnerable pupils in need of particular support. Pupils themselves receive regular training in how to keep themselves safe, including on line. Those, including boarders, who were interviewed, were confident that there are a number of adults they would be happy to speak to with any worries. They receive a response when concerns are raised and suitable action is taken as required. They asserted that relationships between pupils are respectful and that they regard and value diversity as part of their individuality. The governing body maintains suitable oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures, informed by a nominated governor who regularly liaises with the DSL. Safeguarding arrangements are sufficient to meet the needs of increased numbers of pupils.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 6]

- 2.5 The school meets the standards.
- 2.6 The school's policy and procedures are implemented effectively to ensure that the premises and equipment are maintained in a suitable condition to promote health and safety. These include ensuring that the site and equipment are suitably maintained. Staff receive training relevant to their role and those interviewed reported that any defects are remedied promptly. Evidence indicates that these existing procedures are likely to continue to meet requirements when the number of pupils is increased.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 7]

- 2.7 The school meets the standards.
- 2.8 The school implements appropriate measures for fire safety. These include suitable fire risk assessments, provision for the prevention of fire, staff training, and the maintenance of fire detection

and fire-fighting equipment. Records confirm suitable fire evacuation drills are carried out. Existing measures are sufficient to ensure the safety from fire of additional pupils.

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

2.9 The school meets the standards.

2.10 The school implements suitable arrangements to ensure that pupils are adequately supervised throughout the school day. Duty rotas are organised effectively, and pupils confirmed that outside of teaching time staff are dispersed around the site and indoors, so readily available. Arrangements for supervision in boarding time are similarly appropriate. Evidence indicates that this standard is likely to continue to be met with additional pupil numbers.

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

2.11 The school meets the standards.

2.12 The school's risk assessment policy indicates a systematic approach to the identification and mitigation of risk. Risk assessments for the premises and school visits are thorough and monitored by senior staff. Evidence indicates that this standard is likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 14]

2.13 The school meets the standards.

2.14 The school undertakes all the necessary checks required by the standard prior to the start of employment, though not all were recorded correctly on the single central register of appointments. This was rectified during the inspection. Additional pupils will not adversely impact on these standards.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–30; NMS 5]

2.15 The school meets the standards.

2.16 The school has sufficient toilet and washing facilities for the proposed additional number of pupils. Changing rooms are similarly sufficient for increased capacity. The medical centre provides suitable staffing levels and spacious accommodation for the treatment and medical care of pupils, including boarders, who are ill or injured.

2.17 Internal and external lighting and acoustic conditions are suitable. Drinking water stations are available throughout the site and the requirements for water supply and temperature are satisfactory. The school buildings are surrounded by playing fields used for games and recreation and there are additional indoor sports facilities including a sports hall. A new nursery room is of a sufficient size, equipped to a suitable standard and located adjacent to existing provision. Additional facilities for an enlarged sixth form, such as work rooms and a sixth-form café are appropriate. Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to continue to be met with the increased numbers of pupils proposed.

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

2.18 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]

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 The governors and leadership have the required skills, knowledge and understanding to discharge their responsibilities effectively to ensure the other standards are met consistently and to promote the health, safety and welfare of pupils and boarders. Governors and senior leaders have carefully analysed any impact of the requested additional capacity within their strategic planning. They have implemented suitable measures to ensure provision is likely to remain suitable and actively promote the well-being of pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change request

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to increase its capacity from 600 to 650 pupils be approved. The school has planned suitably for this proposed increase in numbers. To establish provision for younger children, it has established a room for children between the ages of two and three, adjacent to its existing nursery accommodation. It has also provided additional work rooms for sixth formers and completed a café for their use. There is sufficient teaching accommodation and washroom facilities for additional pupils. The school site is spacious and offers ample space for recreation and sport.

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. She visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.