



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

Dean Close Preparatory School

October 2019



School's details

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|----------------------------------|---|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School | Dean Close Preparatory School | | | |
| DfE number | 916/6034 | | | |
| Registered charity number | 1086829 | | | |
| Address | Dean Close Preparatory School Lansdown Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 6QS | | | |
| Telephone number | 01242 512217 | | | |
| Email address | dcpsoffice@deanclose.org.uk | | | |
| Headmaster | Mr Paddy Moss | | | |
| Chair of governors | Mrs Kathryn Carden | | | |
| Age range | 2 to 13 | | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 439 | | | |
| | Day pupils | 364 | Boarders | 75 |
| | EYFS | 95 | Years 1 and 2 | 49 |
| | Years 3 and 4 | 59 | Years 5 and 6 | 101 |
| | Years 7 and 8 | 135 | | |
| Date of visit | 11 October 2019 | | | |

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Dean Close Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between two and thirteen years. Pupils may board in the prep school. The school, which includes Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School, is part of the Dean Close Foundation. The Warden is responsible for oversight of the Dean Close Foundation and reports to a Board of Trustees who are responsible for governance arrangements.
- 1.2 The school has 38 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupil has an education, health and care plan. Also, 32 pupils speak English as an additional language.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.3 This was an announced progress monitoring visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the focused compliance and educational quality inspection in March 2019.

| Regulations which were the focus of the visit | Team judgements |
|---|-----------------|
| Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8 (safeguarding); NMS 11 | Met |
| Part 4, paragraph 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 14 | Met |
| Part 6, paragraph 32 (1)(c) (provision of information) | Met |
| Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13.3 to 13.5 | 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 Safeguarding is correctly managed, and procedures are regularly reviewed, including an annual review by the proprietors. There is a named lead practitioner for safeguarding in the EYFS. The designated safeguarding leads across the foundation work closely with their own nominated governors with responsibility for safeguarding. Their work is also effectively supported by a foundation safeguarding lead. Close liaison between these key personnel ensures that policy and procedures are reviewed effectively, in line with KCSIE requirements. The nominated governors for safeguarding understand the role of effective liaison with the local children's safeguarding board.
- 2.5 All members of staff and governors, including those with designated responsibility for safeguarding and those working with boarders, have appropriate levels of safeguarding training, attend regular update training and have a clear understanding of safeguarding and their responsibilities. School leaders and key staff have also undertaken safer recruitment training. Governors ensure that those with specific responsibility for safeguarding are given sufficient time and resources to carry out their roles effectively. Suitable arrangements are in place for the induction of new staff, which includes training in safeguarding. Scrutiny of records of most recent staff update training shows that there was a strong focus on the most recent update of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* 2019.
- 2.6 Recruitment procedures have been strengthened since the previous inspection ensuring that all the required checks are carried out before the commencement of employment. These include checks against the barred list and against those prohibited from teaching and school management. A suitable code of conduct is implemented effectively and understood by all staff and includes advice on e-safety and the appropriate use of social media. The staff code of conduct is integral to all safeguarding and child protection documentation. During interview staff reported that they felt confident with the school's whistleblowing procedures and that they would feel happy to make any referral directly to children's social services should the need arise. The school ensures that boarders are not discriminated against, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, or because of their cultural background, linguistic background, special educational need, or academic or sporting ability.

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

- 2.7 The school meets the standards.
- 2.8 There is a suitable safer recruitment policy in place. Since the previous inspection the school has undertaken a review of its recruitment procedures ensuring that there are now clear lines of accountability. The process now ensures that all necessary checks are undertaken before the commencement of employment. These include checks on medical fitness. Staff and others cannot begin work at the school until an 'all clear' email has been issued by the school's human resources (HR) department. The school has introduced a coloured lanyard system which identifies those people

whose checks have been undertaken. The HR department issues weekly updates to all senior leaders as to how the recruitment process relating to specific staff is progressing. There is a suitable system of periodic review of the recruitment process by school leaders. A scrutiny of minutes from governor meetings demonstrates the proactive approach that they have taken in ensuring that practice supports the published policy and procedures.

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

- 2.9 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 13.3 to 13.5]

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 School leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively to actively promote the well-being of pupils. They have ensured that there are appropriate procedures in place for the safer recruitment of staff in order to fully safeguard pupils.

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 the 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 head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the warden and a governor. They talked with groups of pupils and staff. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.