



Material Change Inspection Report

Hatherop Castle School

November 2023

School's details

School	Hatherop Castle School			
DfE number	916/6012			
Address	Hatherop Castle School Hatherop Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 3NB			
Telephone number	01285 750206			
Email address	admissions@hatheropcastle.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Nigel Reed			
Chair of proprietors	Mr Sam Antrobus			
Proprietor	Hatherop Castle Limited			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	283			
	Day pupils	263	Boarders	20
	Nursery	38	Pre-prep	73
	Prep	172		
Date of inspection	7 November 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Hatherop Castle School is a co-educational day and boarding school situated near Cirencester. It is overseen by the chief executive officer of the Wishford Schools group, of which the school is part, assisted by an advisory committee. The school consists of the nursery for children aged from two to four years, which includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting; the pre-prep, for pupils aged from four to seven years; and the prep, for pupils aged from seven to thirteen years. Boarding is available from the age of seven. The school has 66 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. Three pupils have an education, health and care plan. Seven pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a focussed compliance and educational quality inspection in May 2023.

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 its capacity from 245 to 325 pupils. The increase will be primarily in numbers of day pupils. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour)	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 (checking suitability of staff)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 23-30 (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

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.1 The school meets the standard.
- 2.2 The school encourages tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions effectively by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. Leaders encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act, including those of pupils with SEND. These principles are actively promoted through the school's values, assemblies and curriculum.
- 2.3 Evidence indicates that the standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.4 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.5 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

- 2.6 The school meets the standard.
- 2.7 The school implements its safeguarding policy effectively. Pupils are confident to report their concerns to adults in the school, and these are acted upon in line with statutory guidance. This is confirmed by records of safeguarding. A suitable code of conduct for staff is in place. Staff are aware of how to report concerns about pupils and adults working in the school. Leaders respond to these appropriately.
- 2.8 The school implements appropriate procedures for the management of allegations of child-on-child abuse and incidents involving racial or sexual harassment. When more serious concerns arise, leaders liaise effectively with external agencies and with parents. Appropriate consideration is given to pupils' vulnerabilities which arise as a result of their SEND and mental health needs. In discussion, staff showed appropriate awareness of such vulnerabilities and how to respond to concerns which arise.
- 2.9 Staff, including those with leadership responsibilities, and the proprietor are appropriately trained. The proprietor exercises effective oversight of safeguarding through regular meetings and discussions and through an annual review of safeguarding policy and procedure. Pupils receive effective guidance about online safety and the use of technology within the school is monitored appropriately. Leaders actively seek the views of pupils through regular surveys. Pupils value the encouragement they are given to make their personal views known through these and through inspection surveys and discussions.
- 2.10 Evidence indicates that the standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9]

- 2.11 The school meets the standard.

- 2.12 The school promotes good behaviour through the drawing up and implementation of an effective behaviour policy. Pupils and staff report behaviour as being good overall. This is confirmed through records of incidents of poor behaviour. Incidents of serious misbehaviour are rare and are dealt with in line with the school's stated policy when they arise.
- 2.13 Evidence indicates that the standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standard.
- 2.15 The school implements its health and safety policy effectively. Procedures are in place to ensure the school complies with relevant legislation. Evidence indicates that the standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.16 The school meets the standard.
- 2.17 Appropriate measures are in place to ensure the school complies with the requirements for fire safety. Evidence indicates that the standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.18 The school meets the standard.
- 2.19 The number of staff available to supervise the pupils is appropriate for the current number of pupils in the school. A suitable risk-based approach is taken when allocating staff to educational trips and visits, including those which are residential in nature. Evidence indicates that the standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.20 The school meets the standard.
- 2.21 Suitable risk assessments are implemented in the school and for educational trips and visits. Staff are trained in the drawing up of risk assessments as required by their roles. Suitable risk assessments are drawn up and implemented for pupils with particular emotional or behavioural needs. Staff interviewed demonstrated an appropriate awareness of the importance of understanding the contents of risk assessments for activities in which they play a role. Leaders review all risk assessments at least annually. Risk assessments for educational trips and residential visits are reviewed as a matter of course and changes made to improve arrangements in the future. This ensures continuous improvement and identification of any lessons to be learnt.
- 2.22 Evidence indicates that the standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.23 The school meets the standards.

- 2.24 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietor and a register is kept as required. Evidence indicates that the standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.
- 2.26 Suitable toilet, showering and changing facilities, and 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; water provision is adequate. Existing teaching spaces are sufficient to accommodate the class sizes proposed in the material change application safely. Suitable outdoor space is available for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.27 Evidence indicates that the standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.28 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]

- 2.29 The school meets the standard.
- 2.30 Leaders and managers have the required skills and knowledge to ensure the standards are met and the wellbeing of the pupils is actively promoted. The proprietor has worked closely with school leaders in planning for the proposed material change to ensure that the pastoral, practical and educational needs of the pupils are likely to continue to be met. The proprietor works alongside the school to ensure that when serious incidents arise, these are handled in line with the school's stated procedure and statutory guidance. Leaders review their provision and procedures in the light of specific events, including those relating to safeguarding, and make effective improvements where needed.
- 2.31 Evidence indicates that the standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

- 3.1 It is recommended that the proposed material change in increasing the total number of pupils to 325 be approved. The school proposes to increase the size of year groups in response to changing demands over time. The proposed increase in capacity will be accommodated within the current premises. Suitable plans are in place to adapt the existing accommodation to meet the needs of specific year group sizes in the future. Leaders have identified and prepared for the possibility that a small number of additional staff may be needed in the future. Suitable procedures are in place should additional staffing be required. Current procedures in place to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the pupils are appropriate for the planned increase in pupil numbers.

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