



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Bedford Girls' School

April 2022

School's details

School name	Bedford Girls' School			
DfE number	822/6012			
Registered charity number	1066861			
Address	Bedford Girls' School Cardington Road Bedford Bedfordshire MK42 0BX			
Telephone number	01234 361900			
Email address	information@bedfordgirlsschool.co.uk			
Head	Mrs Gemma Gibson			
Chair of governors	Ms Tina Beddoes			
Age range	7 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	946			
	Juniors	214	Seniors	571
	Sixth Form	161		
Date of visit	22 April 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Bedford Girls' School is an independent day school for female pupils. The school is overseen by a board of governors, most of whom are trustees of the Harpur Trust which oversees this and 2 other schools in the area. The school comprises three departments: the junior school, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years; the senior school, for pupils aged 11 to 16 years; and the sixth form, for pupils aged 16 to 18 years. The school has 27 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom one has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Forty-two pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in January 2020.

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).

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

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 standard.
- 2.4 Safeguarding procedures are implemented suitably in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) 2021. Records of regular meetings indicate that the safeguarding team works closely together with pastoral leaders to promote pupils' well-being, including that of individual pupils with particular emotional needs as well as those with SEND. Those with pastoral responsibilities are appropriately trained and are experienced in sourcing the correct professional help for pupils who may require additional specialist support. The designated safeguarding lead [DSL] ensures that safeguarding information is regularly shared with staff, parents and pupils and that procedures are monitored. In discussions, pupils reported that they feel they are listened to by staff and that there are many opportunities to raise any concerns. Inspection evidence, including safeguarding records, confirms this view and that action is taken when pupils' specific needs are identified. Incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence, including online, since the previous inspection, have been dealt with competently. The DSL has sought external advice promptly where it has been necessary. Those with designated responsibilities work effectively with external agencies.
- 2.5 Staff receive suitable training when new to the school and, from thereon, update training about the most recent statutory guidance is provided. Staff have completed online training in the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Central records of staff attendance at training are kept systematically, so that absentees at the time of training can be identified. A sample of staff interviewed demonstrated a full awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities, a knowledge of the correct referral pathways and an understanding of how to respond to concerns. Members of staff are clear about whether pupils are respectively in need or at risk. They understand that if any pupils are victims of harmful sexual behaviour or potentially so, safeguarding partners and the police should be contacted immediately. They also showed a clear understanding of the code of conduct which the school requires them to follow, particularly with regard to the use of mobile technology and social media. Records confirm that the school deals effectively with any reported incidents involving inappropriate use of technology by staff or pupils.
- 2.6 The school safeguarding team works together with governors to produce an annual report which follows the local authority guidelines and provides suitable annual review. Arrangements for handling allegations against staff are included in safeguarding procedures, as are procedures to carry out checks prior to appointment on adults working with children. The school understands its role in reporting any person whose services are no longer used where referral criteria are met, to the appropriate agencies and suitable arrangements exist to handle allegations against those working with children.

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

- 2.7 The school meets the standard.

- 2.8 The school ensures that pupils are always under supervision while attending school and staffing levels are sufficient to ensure that pupils are kept safe during their leisure time in school.

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]

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 Those with leadership and management positions demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively and ensure that arrangements ensure that staff provide appropriate pastoral care for the pupils. Governors and senior leaders review specific cases where pupils have particular needs and consider with suitable care what measures are necessary to support such pupils, including seeking external help from qualified professionals. They actively promote the well-being of 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 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 chair of governors. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.