



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT
FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

THE ORATORY PREPARATORY SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	The Oratory Preparatory School			
DfE number	931/6055			
Registered charity number	309112			
Address	Goring Heath Reading Oxfordshire RG8 7SF			
Telephone number	0118 984 4511			
Email address	office@oratoryprep.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Robert Stewart			
Proprietor Chair of governors	Dr Christina Hill-Williams			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	417			
	Boys	263	Girls	154
	Day pupils	398	Boarders	19
	EYFS	55	Juniors	261
	Seniors	101		
Inspection dates	1 to 2 November 2017			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 The Oratory Preparatory School is an independent day and boarding co-educational school for pupils aged between 2 and 13 years. It is a Roman Catholic school which accepts pupils of all faiths or none. The school and the Oratory Senior School are part of the Oratory School Association which is a registered charity. They are run as separate schools but share the same governing body. The prep school opened in 1925 in Edgbaston and moved to its current site in Oxfordshire in 1969. The majority of boarders join in Years 3 and 6, with overseas pupils joining in Years 7 and 8. They are housed in the school boarding house which is situated upstairs in the main school building. The pre-preparatory department opened in 1970, including girls for the first time, and in 2014 a new nursery extended provision to include two year olds. The current headmaster took up his post in January 2017.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school seeks to pursue excellence in all it does, ensuring that every boy and girl fulfils their maximum potential, fulfilling the provisions of the Education Reform Act (1988) by providing a broad curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, mental, cultural and physical development of the pupils as well as fostering values of kindness, courtesy and respect for others. It aims to foster and develop British values as well as introducing pupils to a range of different lifestyles, views and cultures, increasing their understanding and tolerance of all people, faith and ethnicities.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, mostly from the south of England, with a small number of boarders from overseas. Nationally standardised tests indicate the ability profile of the school is above average. Results in maths, reading, and spelling standardised tests indicate that the achievement of the school has been above average. The number of pupils identified by the school as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 47. Thirty-five pupils receive additional support for dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD/ADD or autism. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English as an additional language (EAL) support is provided for 16 pupils during English, Latin and French lessons and more able pupils' needs are met by appropriate differentiation.

2. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools ('boarding NMS'). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards, including the boarding NMS, may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key Findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. The DSL's training, knowledge and safeguarding procedures and policies are all up to date, correct and effective. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.9 The school does not have adequate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, as these do not pay due regard to current statutory guidance. The required checks of staff, contractors and governors are not always completed prior to appointment, including those for the barred list, prohibition from teaching and from management.
- 2.10 The school does not ensure that, should an enhanced DBS check be delayed, a barred list check is undertaken and appropriate safeguards put in place. The school does not consistently carry out identity check on employees of contractors, or obtain written confirmation that the required pre-employment checks have been made before a person starts work at the school.
- 2.11 The standard on child protection (NMS 11) is not met for the same reasons and represents a failure to safeguard boarders.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety paragraphs 9–16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education**

Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–10, 12, 15 and 16 are met but those in paragraphs 7 (a) and (b) and 8 (a) and (b) and NMS 11 are not met.

Action point 1

- the school must ensure that its arrangements for the recruitment of staff, contractors and governors pay due regard to statutory guidance, including ensuring that checks are made against the barred list and the lists of those prohibited from teaching or management [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b) and for the same reason NMS 11].

Action point 2

- the school must ensure that should an enhanced DBS check be delayed, a barred list check must be undertaken and appropriate safeguards put in place [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b) and for the same reasons NMS 11].

Action point 3

- the school must ensure that in the case of employees of contractors, it checks identity and obtains written confirmation from the employer that the required pre-employment checks have been made, before a person starts work at the school [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b) and for the same reason NMS 11].

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

2.13 Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised. The school does not appoint guardians.

2.14 The school does not make all appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of employees of contractors, staff and proprietors. Staff qualifications are not always checked. The school does not ensure that its register of appointments is accurate and complete.

2.15 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraph 18(2)(a),(b), (c)(i-iii), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e) and (4) paragraph 20, paragraph 21 (1), (2), (4) to (8) and NMS 14.2-14.4 are met but those in paragraphs 18(2) (c)(iv), 18(2)(f), 18(3) and paragraph 21(3)(a)(i-viii) and (b) and NMS 14.1 are not met.

Action point 4

- the school must ensure that all appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors are carried out prior to a person beginning work in the school, notably those for qualifications [paragraphs 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(f), 18(3) and for the same reason NMS 14.1].

Action point 5

- the school must ensure that all checks are recorded as required in its single central register of appointments [paragraph 21 (3)(a)(i-viii) and (b) and for the same reason NMS 14.1].

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.16 Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their 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. Suitable

outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

2.17 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.18 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

2.19 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.20 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

2.21 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.22 Leadership and management actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

2.23 Governors have not ensured that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the regulatory standards are met consistently. The oversight of obtaining and recording pre-employment checks is not adequate.

2.24 The standards relating to leadership and management of the school in sub-paragraphs 34(1)(c) and NMS 13.2, 13.5-13.9 are met but those in sub-paragraphs 34(1)(a) and (b) and NMS 13.1, 13.3 and 13.4 are not met

Action point 6

- **governors must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibility demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Independent Schools Standards and National Minimum Standards for boarding are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1)(a) and (b) and NMS 13.1, 13.3 and 13.4).**

3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Julie Lowe	Reporting inspector
Mr Howard Tuckett	Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Michael Brewer	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, ISA school)