



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	St Mary's School			
DfE number	202/6084			
Registered Charity Number	2643515			
Address	St Mary's School 47 Fitzjohn's Avenue Hampstead London NW3 6PG			
Telephone number	020 7435 1868			
Email address	office@stmh.co.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Harriet Connor-Earl			
Chair of Governors	Mrs Susan McCarron			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	302			
	Boys	11	Girls	291
	EYFS	77	Juniors	225
Inspection dates	29 to 30 November 2017			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 St Mary's School was founded by the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a Catholic day school in 1871, moving to Hampstead in 1926. It is centred around a large Victorian house. Primarily a girls' school, boys may attend up to the age of 7. In 1991, the school became a registered charity with a board of trustees and a governing body. The trustees are responsible for the overall strategy of the school and financial matters. The governors are responsible for the educational direction, policy and priorities, within the budgets and objectives established by the trustees. Since the previous inspection, a new all-weather sports surface has opened, and many classrooms have been refurbished. The current headmistress took up post in September 2016.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide an education firmly founded on the Catholic faith, nurturing spiritual and moral principles. It sets out to create a caring environment, recognising the dignity and worth of each child. It aspires to foster high standards and intellectual development, with the pursuit of academic excellence. The school seeks to value the unique contribution of every child and encourage an active partnership between home, school and the community.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come predominantly from professional families, whose varied ethnic backgrounds reflect those of the local area. Nationally standardised test data indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 51 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 35 receive specialist support. They mostly require support with dyslexia, cognition and learning. Four pupils have a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 169 pupils; 7 receive support for this aspect of their learning. The school provides support for pupils identified as being more able, gifted and talented by adjusting its curriculum to meet their needs and providing additional activities.

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, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions 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.

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 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. 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](#), [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 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.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is 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. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 The school's safeguarding arrangements do not meet current requirements, as the school does not undertake appropriate checks on staff and proprietors in a timely manner, notably those of references, employment history, disqualification from childcare, prohibitions from management and the children's barred list. The school does not make suitable checks on contractor staff, nor keep adequate records of such checks.
- 2.9 **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 are met but those in paragraph 7 [safeguarding] are not met.**

Action point 1

- the school must ensure that its arrangements for the appointment of staff and proprietors pay due regard to statutory guidance [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

Action point 2

- the school must ensure that it undertakes the required checks on contractors, and records these appropriately [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

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

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks on supply staff.

- 2.11 The school does not make appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors in a timely manner, notably the checks of identity; medical fitness; the right to work in the UK and criminal background, in both the UK and overseas. A register is not kept as required, notably entries relating to criminal record checks for staff from both the United Kingdom and overseas.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraph 19 [supply staff] are met but those in paragraphs 18 (2)(c)(i-iii), 18(2)(d) and (e), 18 (3); paragraph 20 (6)(b)(i) and (ii) and paragraph 21(3)(a)(v), (vi) and (viii)[suitability of staff, proprietors and the central register of appointments] are not met.**

Action point 3

- the school must ensure that all appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors are carried out prior to a person taking up their role in the school [paragraph 18(2)(c)(i), (ii) and (iii), 18(2)(d) and (e), 18(3) and for the same reason paragraph 20(6)(b)(i) and (ii)].

Action point 4

- the school must ensure that all checks are recorded as required in its central register of appointments [paragraph 21(3)(a)(v), (vi) and (viii)].

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.15 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.
- 2.16 **The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.17 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.
- 2.18 **The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management actively promote the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.20 The proprietor has not ensured that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that regulatory standards are met consistently. The oversight and recording of pre-employment checks on staff and proprietors are not satisfactory.
- 2.21 The standards relating to leadership and management of the school in sub-paragraph 34(1)(c) is met but those in sub-paragraphs 34(1)(a) and (b) [knowledge and skills and fulfilment of responsibilities] are not met.**

Action point 5

- **the school 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 are met consistently [paragraph 34(1)(a) and (b)].**

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, governors and trustees, and attended an assembly. Inspectors visited 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

Mr Richard Johnson

Reporting inspector

Ms Louise Squire

Compliance team inspector (Assistant head pastoral, IAPS school)