



Material Change Inspection Report

The Perse School

February 2024

School's details

School name	The Perse School			
DfE number	873/6010			
Registered charity number	1120654			
Address	The Perse School Hills Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 8QF			
Telephone number	01223 403893 or 403800			
Email address	office@perse.co.uk			
Head	Mr Edward Elliott			
Chair of governors	Mr Jonathan Scott			
Proprietor	The Perse School			
Age Range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1705			
	EYFS	70	Pre-prep	87
	Prep	283	Upper school	1265
Date of inspection	6 February 2024			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 The Perse School is a co-educational independent day school, located in Cambridge. The school is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is overseen by a governing body. It consists of three sections, each located on a separate site: the pre-prep for pupils aged three to seven, which includes an early years setting; the prep for those aged seven to eleven; and the upper school for those aged eleven to eighteen. The school has 341 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities of whom one has an education, health and care plan. Two pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance and educational quality inspection in March 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 1720 to 1790 by increasing the number of pupils admitted to the upper school. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework. It was focused in the upper school.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying)	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 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23-29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints procedure)	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 The school implements its policy effectively to ensure the safeguarding of the pupils. Pupils are confident to report their concerns to adults in the school, knowing that they will be listened to, and that appropriate action will be taken. Records of safeguarding confirm that this occurs. Staff, governors and those in positions of responsibility for safeguarding have been appropriately trained. Designated members of staff are trained to support pupils when concerns arise relating to specific safeguarding issues such as mental health or inappropriate sexual behaviour. They do so effectively. Pupils are aware of these adults in school and value the additional support they offer.
- 2.5 Those with leadership responsibilities monitor pastoral records continually. They swiftly identify safeguarding concerns and support staff in managing these. When concerns arise regarding pupils about whom there are mental health concerns, these are handled sensitively and in line with the school's stated policy. The school liaises as required with external agencies and parents. Suitable arrangements are implemented for the management of allegations of child-on-child abuse, including any discriminatory behaviour.
- 2.6 In discussions, staff demonstrated a secure understanding of recent training and of the school's processes for responding to safeguarding concerns. Allegations and concerns about adults working in the school are handled appropriately and in line with local procedures. Staff demonstrated a secure understanding of the staff code of conduct and of the school's procedures for reporting low level concerns about adults in the school.
- 2.7 The proprietor maintains suitable oversight of safeguarding through an annual review of policy and procedures. They ensure effective oversight of the use of technology in the school and pupils are given suitable guidance about online safety. Sufficient numbers of staff have designated responsibility for safeguarding to ensure continued effective provision and oversight should the material change be approved.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10]

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.
- 2.9 The school ensures that bullying is prevented as far as is practicable by the effective implementation of a suitable anti-bullying strategy. Staff are trained in anti-bullying measures and pupils are given suitable guidance. Pupils say that bullying is rare, and that they are able to report it when it occurs. They are confident that their concerns will be addressed appropriately. Records confirm the school's swift response to allegations of bullying and implementation of its policy. This includes a sensitive approach which supports both alleged victims and perpetrators. Instances of bullying which may be regarded as potential safeguarding issues are considered as such and appropriate measures taken

when required. 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]

2.10 The school meets the standard.

2.11 The school ensures the effective implementation of health and safety procedures as required by 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]

2.12 The school meets the standard.

2.13 Appropriate measures are in place to comply with fire safety requirements. 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]

2.14 The school meets the standard.

2.15 The number of staff available to supervise the pupils is appropriate for the current pupil numbers. The school has suitable plans to supervise increased numbers of pupils. 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]

2.16 The school meets the standard.

2.17 The school makes careful assessment of risks associated with the grounds, buildings, educational visits and pupil welfare. This includes the risks associated with the construction of additional premises to meet the needs of the growing pupil numbers. Appropriate measures are identified to mitigate and manage these risks. 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]

2.18 The school meets the standards.

2.19 The school undertakes and records the required checks before adults are appointed to roles or begin work in the school. There are suitable arrangements to undertake checks on additional staff who will be appointed when the need arises as pupil numbers increase. 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 23-29]

2.20 The school meets the standards.

2.21 School premises and accommodation are suitably maintained so that the relevant standards are met. Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities are available. Acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable accommodation is provided for pupils' medical and therapy needs. Suitable outdoor space is available for physical education and outdoor play.

- 2.22 Previous building work has expanded accommodation in areas such as music, the performing arts and dining space. New building works and room reallocations are currently underway. These are likely to be ready for September to provide additional space for general teaching, science and sport. Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.23 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.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33]

- 2.24 The school meets the standard.
- 2.25 The school implements a suitable policy for the handling of complaints. This includes a three-stage process which moves from informal to formal stages, including an appeals panel. These are managed in line with the school's stated procedures and records kept as required. Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.26 The school meets the standard.
- 2.27 Governors maintain effective oversight of the school. They ensure that leaders and managers demonstrate the required skills and knowledge so that the other standards are consistently met and the wellbeing of the pupils is actively promoted.
- 2.28 Leaders and governors have drawn up suitably detailed plans in preparation for the proposed material change. Careful consideration has been given to the potential impact on all aspects of school life. Actions have been taken to ensure that the standards are 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 be approved. The school proposes to increase the size of Years 7 and 8 so that they are of a similar size to the other year groups in the school in response to changing demands in the local area. The proposed increase in capacity will be accommodated largely within the existing premises, which have grown over recent years. Additional building work is scheduled to be completed before the expected entry of additional pupils and will further increase the school's facilities. Current procedures in place to ensure the health and safety of the pupils are appropriate for the planned increase in numbers. Suitable procedures are in place to facilitate the recruitment of additional staff as required. Pastoral provision has already been increased to provide for the needs of additional pupil numbers and suitable plans are in place to adapt these further as the need arises.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a group of governors. She visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.