



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

Marlborough College

October 2022

School's details

School name	Marlborough College			
DfE number	865/6013			
Registered charity number	309486			
Address	Marlborough College Marlborough Wiltshire SN8 1PA			
Telephone number	01672 892400			
Email address	enquiries@marlboroughcollege.org			
Master	Mrs Louise Moelwyn-Hughes			
Chair of governors	Mr Giles Henderson			
Age Range	13 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1009			
	Day pupils	38	Boarders	971
	Seniors	568	Sixth Form	441
Date of inspection	10 October 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Marlborough College is an independent co-educational school. Almost all pupils are boarders, accommodated in sixteen boarding houses. Founded in 1834, the school is now an educational charity governed by its trustees who are known as the council.
- 1.2 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds from families living mainly in the south of England. The school has identified 138 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 63 receive specialist support. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Thirty-three pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 14 receive help with their English language skills.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.3 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the regulatory compliance inspection on 10 to 12 November 2021. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022.
- 1.4 Additionally, this inspection serves as a material change inspection to assess the school's proposal to increase the maximum number of pupils on roll by 10 to 1025 pupils.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 4, paragraph 18-21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 19	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); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

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

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 standards.
- 2.4 The safeguarding policy is implemented effectively. The school has strengthened its procedures for safeguarding since the previous inspection through the implementation of more rigorous procedures to ensure the suitability of staff.
- 2.5 All staff and governors have received training on the most recent updates to the government's statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2022). Those who are responsible for appointing new staff have had suitable training in safer recruitment. The governing body, particularly through the safeguarding governor, now provides effective oversight of the school's safeguarding practices and procedures, including the recruitment process, and conducts a thorough annual review.
- 2.6 All staff have been trained in the system for recording individual concerns. Specific incidents are recorded thoroughly, and this facilitates the early identification of any overarching issues. There is effective liaison with external agencies from whom the DSL seeks advice whenever required. The school acts effectively in any cases of sexual harassment or child-on-child abuse which occur. It is active in supporting pupils where there are any concerns about their mental health. Pupils have received workshops and assemblies to supplement their regular lessons in relationships and sex education (RSE).
- 2.7 Staff are familiar with the school's whistleblowing policy and confirmed that they would not hesitate to use it if the need arose. They understand the staff code of conduct. They know what to do should a pupil disclose any matters of a safeguarding nature and also what appropriate action to take if they have concerns about another member of staff, be it a low-level concern or a more serious allegation. Any allegations against staff are handled appropriately.
- 2.8 Procedures for checking the suitability of staff have received a radical overhaul and are now controlled very tightly. No person is allowed to start work in the school until all checks have been undertaken, however inconvenient this may be for the school. These includes receipt of satisfactory references. There is clear understanding of necessary requirements and safeguards should a person need to start work in a regulated activity before a DBS certificate has been seen.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 19]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 All staff, whatever their position or role, are thoroughly checked before they start work. A person's identity and right to work in the UK are confirmed. Qualifications are checked as are any gaps in employment. Their medical fitness to undertake the role to which they are appointed is verified. Where relevant, staff are checked against the list of those prohibited from teaching or from managing a school. Police checks with the relevant authorities are obtained for those who have spent time living

or working abroad. All staff submit to an enhanced criminal record check through the disclosure and barring service. For the 70 or more staff appointed since January 2022, all checks have been completed before the person starts work at the school

- 2.11 The dates of all checks are recorded appropriately on the single central register of appointments, and evidence of the checks is kept in staff files. A senior member of staff verifies that all checks have been undertaken. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding also carries out checks from time to time.

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

- 2.12 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; NMS 14]

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 Parental complaints are handled effectively through a three-stage process and in accordance with the procedures set out in the school's complaints policy. Initially, the school seeks to resolve each complaint informally. If parents are not satisfied at this stage, they may submit a formal complaint in writing to the master. If parents are still not satisfied that the complaint has been resolved to their satisfaction, they may choose to proceed to a hearing before a panel of three, none of whom have been directly involved in the case and one of whom is independent of the school. Parents have a right to attend the panel hearing and to be accompanied if they so wish. Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant and other parties as appropriate. There is a clear and easily accessible process for boarders to raise their own complaints about boarding provision.
- 2.15 The school keeps meticulous records of all formal complaints, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful. These identify complaints relating to boarding. Over the past year, one complaint proceeded to a panel hearing and the arrangements made were consistent with the school's published procedures.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]

- 2.16 The school meets the standards.
- 2.17 The school's leaders have taken suitably decisive steps to implement its action plan, to rectify the failings identified by the previous inspection, to strengthen safeguarding, and to implement more robust procedures for the recruitment of staff. They have demonstrated good skills and knowledge and have fulfilled their responsibilities effectively so that the other standards are consistently met. They actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

4. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Summary of findings

- 4.1 The school intends to bring into permanent operation a property which has previously been used to house pupils temporarily whilst maintenance was being undertaken elsewhere. As such, the house is fully functional. It will be used to accommodate Year 12 pupils from a house that has reached capacity.
- 4.2 It comprises single and double study bedrooms, kitchen and recreational areas. It has sufficient washing, showering and toilet facilities for the needs of the boarders and is in good repair. There are no apparent health and safety hazards. Fire exits are clearly signposted and the building is protected by its own fire alarm system. The house includes staff accommodation so that pupils may be supervised appropriately.

Recommendation

- 4.3 It is recommended that department grant the school's request to increase the maximum number of pupils on roll by 10 to 1025.

5. Summary of evidence

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

Inspectors

Mr Graham Sims

Reporting inspector

Mr Michael Evans

Assistant reporting inspector