



Material Change Inspection Report

Abercorn School

October 2023

School's details

School	Abercorn School			
DfE number	213/6364			
Address	Abercorn School 28 Abercorn Place London NW8 9XP			
Telephone number	020 7286 4785			
Email address	admin@abercornschoo.com			
Headmaster	Mr Christopher Hammond			
Individual proprietor	Mrs Andrea Greystoke			
Proprietor	Abercorn School (London) Limited			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	181			
	EYFS	58	Lower school	33
	Senior school	90		
Date of inspection	31 October 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Abercorn School is a co-educational day school established in 1987. The sole proprietor is the director of a limited company supported by an advisory board, with management delegated to the headmaster. The school is accommodated on two sites near central London: the lower school consisting of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children aged 2 to 4 and Years 1 and 2 for pupils aged 4 to 7, based at Abercorn Place; and the senior school for pupils aged 7 to 16 based at Paddington Street. The school also uses an adjoining property in Garbutt Place. The school has 47 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. None has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 86 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in September 2022.

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 the age range of pupils from 2 to 13 to 2 to 16. 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.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 2 to 4 (curriculum, including relationships and sex education, teaching and assessment)	Met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum, including relationships and sex education (RSE), teaching and assessment [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2 to 4]

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 The curriculum is suitably documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. These include an appropriate proposed curriculum for pupils aged 14 to 16, which a group of pupils in Year 10 have begun to study successfully. Suitable relationships and sex education (RSE) provision is made at all ages of pupils currently in the school. This is in line with statutory requirements. The statement of the school's provision is published appropriately. Suitable elements are included for teaching RSE to those aged 14 to 16 and potentially above that age.
- 2.3 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. This includes the assessment of GCSE courses.
- 2.4 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements when the upper age limit for pupils is increased to include 14 to 16-year-olds.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.5 The school meets the standard.
- 2.6 The school's principles and values are actively promoted through curiosity, creativity and collaboration, which are intrinsic to the school's ethos. These facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Lessons provide for a strong focus on British values throughout the school. They encourage respect, tolerance and empathy towards the needs of others, including those with protected characteristics. This was evident in positive interactions observed between pupils and between staff and pupils. During discussion, pupils articulated the view that rules are necessary to ensure equality and fairness within society. A range of themed opportunities to explore sustainability and current affairs across the diverse school community engenders pupils' effective understanding of different cultures and the needs of a diverse world. Pupils develop age-appropriate democratic knowledge through classroom debates, the school council membership and a parallel 2019 national election activity in school.
- 2.7 The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements when the upper age limit for pupils is increased to include 14 to 16-year-olds.

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.8 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.

- 2.11 Scrutiny of records, observation and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that appropriate safeguards are implemented effectively, including in the EYFS. Those responsible for safeguarding hold senior positions within the school. They are suitably knowledgeable and appropriately trained, including for multi-agency working. Safeguarding, pastoral and healthcare staff share key information regularly and effectively. They take into account each individual pupil's physical and psychological needs and wishes, including those of pupils who have SEND. This information is used to agree appropriate action including the drawing up and implementation of individual support plans. There is effective liaison with external agencies, including referral to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and the local authority designated officer (LADO) for safeguarding. Training for other staff and for the proprietor is conducted regularly as required. It is effective and includes informal updates.
- 2.12 Staff are knowledgeable about changes in recent legislation, including the management of children's mental wellbeing, contextual safeguarding, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence. They understand the principles underpinning the staff code of conduct and the procedures for making a referral, including the importance of low-level reporting. They are confident about using whistleblowing procedures. Interviews with staff confirmed that training is thorough and safeguarding is managed effectively. Senior leaders take appropriate action if any perceived breach of the staff code of conduct occurs or an allegation is received with regard to an adult who works with children. They understand their responsibility to make referral to relevant statutory bodies once investigations by external agencies are completed and do so.
- 2.13 The proprietor responsible for safeguarding meets regularly with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies. This maintains effective oversight of safeguarding policies and their implementation in the main school and in the EYFS. Reports are given regularly to the proprietor and advisory board by the DSL. These highlight appropriate details of any safeguarding incidents which occur, including during trips and outside of school. This ensures that the proprietor has an appropriate level of understanding, scrutiny and oversight. In addition to continuous monitoring, a suitable annual review of safeguarding is undertaken.
- 2.14 Pupils stated confidently that they know how to stay safe, including online. They confirmed that they can talk to staff if they are worried or concerned. Any concerns raised are monitored and acted upon by the DSL. Records confirm that when pupils raise a concern, they receive a timely response and action is taken where needed. Monitoring and filtering of technology are effective.

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

- 2.15 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]

- 2.16 The school meets the standard.
- 2.17 Senior leaders and the proprietor, including those with specific responsibilities for safeguarding and the EYFS, demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all the other standards are met consistently, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the request to increase the age range of pupils from 2 to 13 to 2 to 16 is granted.

4. Summary of evidence

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