



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Additional Inspection Report

Taunton School

May 2023

School's details

School	Taunton School			
DfE number	933/6025			
Registered charity number	1081420			
Address	Taunton School Staplegrove Road Taunton Somerset TA2 6AD			
Telephone number	01823 703703			
Email address	enquiries@tauntonschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr James Johnson			
Chair of governors	Mr Henry Keeling			
Proprietor	Taunton School Educational Charity			
Age range	13 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	738			
	Day pupils	340	Boarders	398
	Taunton School	600	Taunton School International	81
	Taunton School International Middle	57		
Date of inspection	15 May 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Taunton School is a coeducational day and boarding school. It comprises Taunton School, Taunton School International, which is located on an adjacent site and Taunton International Middle School. The latter is located a short distance away. A board of governors is responsible for the oversight of the school. The school has 124 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom three have an education, health and care plan. Throughout the school, 296 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a material change inspection in September 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced additional inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022.

Regulations which are the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8 & 19	Met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour); NMS 15	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 9	Met
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid); NMS 7	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
Part 5, paragraph 24 (accommodation for medical needs)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	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 and 8; NMS 8 and 19]

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 Senior leaders ensure that the safeguarding policy is implemented in all areas. Pupils describe the school's culture with assuredness, explaining that leaders are both approachable and supportive. Pupils further confirmed that they feel able to approach a wide variety of staff if they have a concern and also that they are listened to and supported in such cases with prompt action. This is confirmed by records of safeguarding. They described, in detail, the lengths to which the school goes to ensure their safety online, whether using the school's network or their own mobile devices. Staff have a clear understanding of the school's code of conduct and understand the processes for whistleblowing, which they are prepared to use should they ever feel this necessary. New staff receive a suitable and appropriate safeguarding induction.
- 2.5 All staff, including those with specific safeguarding lead responsibilities, are trained suitably and understand the role that they play in keeping pupils safe. They are knowledgeable about signs of abuse and suitably aware of the potential for child-on-child abuse, and the potential for sexual violence and sexual harassment. They receive regular updates from the safeguarding team, as appropriate, and demonstrate their understanding through online questions and quizzes. Leaders also undertake audits of understanding, following training events, adapting further training opportunities accordingly. Safeguarding leads maintain frequent and regular contact with local safeguarding partners. They engage readily with training provided by these agencies so that all interagency agreed procedures are followed correctly. Governors, who are appropriately trained, effectively oversee the school's safer recruitment procedures and provide appropriate support and challenge for the safeguarding team. The school implements a suitable Prevent strategy.
- 2.6 Arrangements to support those pupils who experience adverse mental health are effective and implemented empathetically. A suitable number of staff have received specific additional training as mental health first aiders. These are supported by a dedicated mental health team based in the school's medical centre, which is open and available to pupils continuously. Procedures for communicating mental health concern awareness to the wider staff body are efficient and suitably implemented.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 15]

- 2.7 The school meets the standards.
- 2.8 Arrangements for promoting good behaviour amongst pupils are set out in a suitable policy document which is successfully implemented. Leaders ensure that any sanctions are fairly applied, having due regard to any protected characteristic, and recorded appropriately. This was confirmed in discussions with pupils, including boarders, who explained that staff were amenable to discussing the reasons for sanctions being given. They appreciated the support of their personal tutors in these endeavours,

explaining that they provide suitable guidance and advocacy for them. Records of sanctions are kept suitably and leaders monitor them to ensure fairness and consistency. Clear criteria are used to determine the level of sanctions applied. Scrutiny of records and discussion with staff and pupils confirm that leaders have also ensured that appropriate adaptations to the implementation of the behaviour policy are made for those pupils with specific needs.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 9]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 The school has a suitable health and safety policy which is implemented effectively. The policy sets out a clear delineation of responsibilities for the entire school, which ensures that those responsible for each area of health and safety manage their responsibilities appropriately. School governors provide effective oversight of health and safety arrangements and undertake regular reviews of implementation, including a review of records kept. Those responsible for managing health and safety report weekly to leaders and termly to the main board of governors on implementation of policy.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – first aid [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13; NMS 7]

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 Appropriate arrangements are made to meet the needs of all pupils, including boarders, who are injured or unwell. There is a sufficient number of appropriately trained staff in the medical centre, the services of which are available continuously. First aid kits are available as required around the school. Boarders have access to appropriate medical services. A general practitioner visits on four days of the week for those who require further consultation. The medical centre also houses a dedicated mental health support team and the school has a suitable number of trained mental health first aiders. Both homely and prescribed medication is stored and dispensed appropriately, with allied records being detailed and appropriately held.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 9]

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 The school successfully implements a suitable risk assessment policy. In particular, this ensures that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified for current pupils, including in boarding. Risk assessments, including those for pupils who have specific vulnerabilities, are recorded and implemented appropriately, monitored and reviewed by leaders and governors. Staff discussions confirm that leaders provide suitable training and support for them when it is necessary to complete risk assessments.

Premises and accommodation – medical facilities [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 24; NMS 7]

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.
- 2.16 Accommodation for both day pupils and boarders who are unwell is provided in a separate medical centre which is continuously staffed by suitably qualified personnel at all hours, including at weekends. The medical centre is spacious, comfortably furnished and hygienically kept. Suitable washing and toilet facilities for pupils is provided both within and adjacent to the sleeping accommodation. Appropriately secured ambient and controlled temperature storage for medication, including controlled drugs is in place.

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

- 2.17 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; NMS 2]

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 The proprietor ensures that leaders and managers at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of all pupils, including boarders.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations that 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. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and spoke with the chair 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 Kerry Lord

Reporting inspector

Mr Patrick Wenham

Assistant reporting inspector