# ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

# Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

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| **School name** | The Grove Independent School |
| **DfE number** | 862/6002 |
| **Address** | Redland Drive<br>Loughton<br>Milton Keynes<br>MK5 8HD |
| **Principal** | Mrs Deborah Berkin |
| **Proprietor** | Mrs Deborah Berkin |
| **Date of visit** | 06 November 2018 |

# 1. Introduction

## Characteristics of the school

1.1 The Grove Independent School is a co-educational preparatory school educating pupils from the age of 3 months to 13 years. It was founded in 1984 by the current principal who is also the sole proprietor. The school has been on its current site in central Milton Keynes since 1989. It has no governing body, but an advisory board has been appointed to support the principal and assist in her proprietorial oversight.

1.2 At the time of the inspection there were 265 pupils on roll (134 girls and 131 boys), of whom 109 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). No pupils board at the school. The school has nine pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, of whom two have an education, health and care plan. No pupils speak English as an additional language.

1.3 The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection on 25 to 26 April 2018.

## Purpose of the visit

1.4 This was an unannounced progress monitoring visit 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 25 to 26 April 2018.

| Regulations which were the focus of the visit | Team judgements |
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| Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding) | Met |
| Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying) | Met |
| Part 3, paragraph 15 (admission register) | Met |
| Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment) | Met |
| Part 5, paragraph 25 (security/maintenance) | Met |
| Part 6, paragraph 32 (provision of information) | Met |
| Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management) | Met |

# 2. Inspection findings

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7; EYFS 3.4, 3.5, 3.14]

**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 Safeguarding is correctly managed, and procedures are regularly reviewed, including a formal annual review by the advisory board. All members of staff, including those with designated responsibility for safeguarding, have appropriate levels of safeguarding training, attend regular update training and have a clear understanding of safeguarding and their responsibilities, including dealing with peer-on-peer abuse. Key training is carried out by the local authority's safeguarding team. Suitable arrangements are in place for the induction of new staff, which includes training in safeguarding. There are appropriate recruitment procedures in place. There is a suitable code of conduct in place which is implemented effectively and understood by all staff, including advice on e-safety and the appropriate use of social media.

2.5 The school ensures that pupils stay safe online and has a suitable e-safety programme in place. Pupils and staff are aware of how technology can be misused and how they can minimise risks.

2.6 The school liaises effectively with local agencies and, when required, understands that prompt action must be taken if concerns are expressed about a child. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) maintains appropriate and regular contact with the relevant children's services and actively seeks support from the local multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). Suitable procedures are in place to deal with allegations against members of staff; there have been no referrals to the Disqualification and Barring Agency (DBS) or Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) since the previous inspection. Pupils interviewed said they feel happy and safe in the school. They confirmed that there are adults within the school to whom they would turn if they had an anxiety or personal concern, and they were confident that they would receive help.

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10; EYFS regulations 3.4 to 3.8]

2.7 The school meets the standards and the requirements.

2.8 The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy that is implemented effectively to ensure that bullying is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable. School policies and procedures reflect *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) 2018, with a focus on peer-on-peer abuse and other relevant content, such as child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment. Scrutiny of the school's bullying log shows that all incidents are suitably recorded on the school's electronic information system. The record shows the names of the individuals involved, the nature of any concern, the dates when any alleged incidents took place, how parents were involved, and any actions taken as a result. All relevant documentation and correspondence is also scanned into the bullying log to ensure a comprehensive record is kept. Senior leaders have a suitable overview of all bullying incidents. This enables them to identify any patterns or trends. The school's leadership team are responsible for gathering all the information together where they may identify multiple concerns which arise about an individual pupil.

2.9 In the first instance any bullying concerns are referred to the senior leader of each section of the school. Any pupils who give concern are discussed at both staff meetings and the weekly meeting of the school's senior leadership team, ensuring a comprehensive approach to raise the profile of pupil behaviour when it is deemed unacceptable. Since the previous inspection the school has strengthened the pastoral systems in operation by developing the managerial roles of heads of houses to include a greater focus on monitoring pupil welfare. Fortnightly meetings with the school's senior leaders review any pupil concerns raised. The scrutiny of minutes from all these meetings demonstrate that all staff and school leaders and managers place great importance on the well-being of pupils. The school understands the thresholds for when any bullying incident may become a safeguarding concern.

2.10 The school has a suitable range of sanctions in place for when bullying occurs. Senior leaders carefully monitor the imposition of sanctions on a pupil-by-pupil basis. The sanctions available, which also includes the possibility of temporary or permanent exclusion, are supported by a comprehensive approach to support both the bully and the victim. The school has an effective system of pupil mentoring and monitoring, through which individual support can be tailored.

2.11 The comprehensive approach to anti-bullying is supported through the school's curriculum and through a variety of events to raise the profile of such occurrences. The personal, social and health education programme effectively covers areas such as peer-on-peer abuse, cyber-bullying, staying safe online and encouraging a climate where pupils feel confident in speaking out against unacceptable behaviour. Such themes are appropriately supported in form times which take place twice daily. School assemblies are used regularly to reinforce the potential consequences of any bullying that may occur. The pupils, in discussions, stated that they also learnt a great deal through the school's anti-bullying week, where a variety of informative events were always scheduled. Pupils felt that they are well-cared for and they were adamant that there is always someone that they could talk to should they have any concerns. They also felt that any concerns that they raise would be taken seriously and followed up appropriately by the school staff.

2.12 All staff are suitably trained to support the school's anti-bullying strategy. Recent update training included elements such as peer-on-peer abuse and associated changes in government legislation as well as specific training on the prevention of cyber-bullying. Senior leaders ensure that the school's anti-bullying and safeguarding procedures are kept at the forefront of staff minds through regular questioning. Recent training has also focused on children's mental health, supporting the school's well-being strategy for pupils. Staff understand the possible signs that pupils may display when bullying occurs, including changes in behaviour, demeanour and attendance. They understand that incidents that may occur away from the school must be treated with equal importance.

2.13 The proprietor has an effective oversight of any bullying concerns and is appropriately supported by the school's advisory board who regularly review school policies and have an active approach to successful policy implementation.

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils – admission and attendance registers [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15]

2.14 The school meets the standards.

2.15 The school maintains a suitable register of admissions in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation 2006. This includes the name of the destination school when a pupil leaves. The school makes a weekly return to the local authority giving details of any pupils who have joined or left the school during the preceding seven days, ensuring that appropriate information is provided when pupils leave the school at non-standard transition points.

## Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; EYFS 3.64, 3.65]

2.16    The school meets the standards and the requirements.

2.17    The school has a suitable risk assessment policy which safeguards and promotes the welfare of pupils. Appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. Since the previous inspection, responsibility for risk assessments has lain with the senior leadership team. A new compliance officer has been appointed by the school who oversees risk assessments as a key element of the role. They are supported by a safety team, made up of key school personnel and an advisory governor, who has specific responsibility for all aspects of health and safety and associated risk management.

2.18    There is a suitable system in place for designated staff to carry out risk assessments for particular areas. A sample of risk assessments scrutinised shows that the school pays appropriate attention to all risk assessments associated with areas, such as trips and visits and areas of potentially higher risk, such as the science laboratory and EYFS play areas. The risk assessments for the EYFS contained relevant information on areas such as supervision requirements and arrangements to handle first aid. An appropriate fire risk assessment was also evaluated for a new building on the school site. The school has undertaken a full site risk assessment since the previous inspection and has responded to the vast majority of the recommendations. All risk assessments contain suitable information on how to mitigate risk.

## Premises and accommodation – maintenance [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25]

2.19    The school meets the standards.

2.20    School premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a suitable standard to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pupils. Since the previous inspection additional closed-circuit monitoring at the school's reception area, a new mobile phone system for alerting when there may be strangers on-site and the introduction of compulsory identification lanyards for all staff have been put in place. New additional electronic access controls to buildings are being fitted.

## Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32]

2.21    The school meets the standards.

2.22    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.

2.23    The school ensures that all necessary information is provided or made available to both parents of pupils at the school and to parents of prospective pupils. This includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year. This information is also displayed on a noticeboard in the foyer of the school and is included in all information packs sent to parents of prospective pupils.

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

2.24    The school meets the standards.

2.25    The school ensures that leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, to ensure that regulations and standards are consistently met.

2.26    Since the previous inspection the proprietor, school leaders and managers, and members of the advisory board have undertaken additional training in areas such as effective governance and on regulatory compliance. This has resulted in a more detailed structure for the advisory board on effective monitoring of the regulatory areas. A rolling programme of policy review has been introduced, which includes an annual review of the safeguarding policy and its implementation. The advisory board have strengthened their roles by determining a clear focus for each visit to the school, such as monitoring the school's safer recruitment arrangements, as well as educational matters through visits to the classrooms.

2.27    School leaders have strengthened their overview of compliance matters and have re-allocated responsibilities accordingly, including to the newly appointed compliance officer.

# 3.    Regulatory action points

3.1    For the regulations which were the focus of this visit, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

# 4.     Summary of evidence

**Written materials**

- Safeguarding policy

- Pastoral policy (Including behaviour and anti-bullying)

- Staff recruitment policy;

- Arrangements to educate pupils about safeguarding, including e-safety, bullying and taking responsibility for their own behaviour

- Records of staff training with particular reference to safeguarding, bullying and the promotion of good behaviour

- Code of conduct for staff

- Sample risk assessments (in school, visits out, high risk areas)

- Risk assessment policy

- Whistleblowing policy

- Minutes with regard to the annual review of the safeguarding/child protection policy and procedures

- Strategic development plan with a focus on site security

- School prospectus and associated information sheets

- Job description for DSL

- Job description for newly appointed compliance officer


**Meetings with school personnel**

- Introductory meeting with principal – to discuss arrangements for the day and to provide initial thoughts on areas specified as focus for the visit

- Meeting with the DSL and DDSL– to discuss implementation of safeguarding policy, training and induction of new staff

- Meeting with deputy head to discuss the school's anti-bullying strategy

- Meeting with person responsible for the maintenance of the school's register of admissions

- Meeting with business manager to discuss risk assessments

- Meeting with senior leadership team to discuss implementation of ISSRs and EYFS requirements

- Meeting with principal to discuss provision of information

- Meeting with senior leadership team to share inspection visit findings

**Activities on site**

- Further scrutiny and evaluation of implementation of policies and documentation (as detailed above)
- Tour of the school to discuss site security and maintenance
- Interviews with pupils chosen by inspectors
- Interview with group of teaching and non-teaching staff chosen by inspectors
- Meeting of inspectors