



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

Sompting Abbotts School

September 2019



School's details

School	Sompting Abbotts School			
DfE number	938/6125			
Address	Sompting Abbotts School Church Lane Sompting Lancing West Sussex BN15 0AZ			
Telephone number	01903 235960			
Email address	office@somptingabbotts.com			
Headmaster	Mr Stuart Douch			
Proprietor	Mrs Patricia Sinclair			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	105			
	EYFS	22	Years 1-2	18
	Years 3-6	49	Years 7-8	16
Date of visit	9 September 2019			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Sompting Abbotts School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between two and thirteen years located in West Sussex. The school has been owned and administered by three generations of the same family since 1946. Family members act as principal, bursar and executive director. The school has identified 39 pupils as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. One pupil has an educational health and care plan, and English is an additional language for one pupil.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 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 focused compliance inspection on 12 March 2019.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7; EYFS 3.4, 3.6, 3.9, 3.11 and 3.14 (safeguarding)	Not all met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21; EYFS 3.9, and 3.12 (suitability of staff)	Remain not met
Part 5, paragraph 25; EYFS 3.4 and 3.62 (premises and accommodation)	Remain not met
Part 6, paragraph 32 (1)(c) (provision of information – safeguarding policy)	Remains not met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Remains not met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7; EYFS 3.4, 3.6, 3.9, 3.11 and 3.14]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school does not meet the requirements.
- 2.2 The school's policy for safeguarding does not provide suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school because it does not refer to the most up to date statutory guidance. The policy does not identify a board lead for safeguarding at director level or refer to all the different forms of peer-on-peer abuse identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (September 2019). Additionally, the previous policy dated January 2019 should be removed from the school website.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school does not meet the standard and some of the EYFS requirements.
- 2.4 The school safeguarding policy is supported by suitable policies covering the staff code of conduct and whistleblowing. Safeguarding procedures show that concerns about pupil welfare have been acted upon appropriately and records are kept secure.
- 2.5 There is now a designated director who acts as board lead for safeguarding who is appropriately trained and maintains close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL and his deputy have received appropriate training for their roles.
- 2.6 Staff interviewed displayed an appropriate awareness of safeguarding policy advice and requirements, including the newest guidance issued by KCSIE 2019. However, training records are insufficient to be able to confirm that all staff have received appropriate training for their role because they do not give dates of training or identify each member of staff who has been trained, and when.
- 2.7 The policy for safer recruitment is suitable but has not been implemented appropriately. Other associated visitor and contractor policies provide differing guidance which is not consistent with the safer recruitment policy. The checks undertaken for the most recent appointments have ensured that staff only start work after a disclosure and barring service (DBS) certificate has been obtained, and the completion of checks against the lists of those barred from working with children and those with prohibition from teaching orders. However, statutory guidance has not been followed with sufficient rigour for other recruitment checks. Suitable references have not always been obtained, nor disqualification from childcare checks undertaken for those for whom this is required, and checks are not always made prior to appointment.

Suitability of staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraph 18 to 21; EYFS 3.9 and 3.12]

- 2.8 The school does not meet all of the standards.
- 2.9 The school ensures the suitability of proprietors. Recruitment procedures still lack sufficient rigour. Checks of identity, qualifications and the right to work in the United Kingdom have been undertaken on all staff appointed since the previous inspection. However, medical fitness checks have not been undertaken for all those recently employed. Individual staff files do not always confirm that these were completed prior to members of staff starting work and the single central register of appointments does not record all the dates on which checks were undertaken. Therefore, it cannot be confirmed that all checks were completed before staff began work.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25; EYFS 3.4 and 3.62]

- 2.10 The school does not meet the standard and requirements.
- 2.11 The premises are generally maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety. However, some security arrangements are inadequate.

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

- 2.12 The school does not meet the requirement.
- 2.13 The school does not meet the requirement for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents because the version of arrangements for safeguarding published on the school's website at the time of the inspection was not the current version implemented in the school.

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

- 2.14 The school does not meet the standard.
- 2.15 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, with the result that the other standards are not consistently met, and the school does not actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Proprietorial overview has been insufficient. Understanding of regulatory matters following training undertaken by the senior leadership has not been sufficient to ensure effective action. As a result, the action plan to address issues identified by the previous inspection visit has not been implemented in a timely or appropriate manner.

3. Regulatory action points

3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety (safeguarding), paragraph 7

- Improve the wording and implementation of the safeguarding policy to identify a designated safeguarding lead at director level and refer to all the different forms of peer-on-peer abuse, as identified in KCSIE (September 2019) [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].
- Ensure that records of training in safeguarding for all staff are maintained which confirm that staff have received all the required elements of safeguarding training and the specific dates of training [paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS 3.6].
- Ensure that all policies for staff, contractors and visitors checks provide consistent guidance which matches that contained in the safer recruitment policy [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].
- Ensure that statutory guidance for all recruitment checks for staff are rigorously followed ensuring that suitable references are obtained and disqualification from childcare checks are undertaken for those for whom this is required, and that checks are always made prior to appointment. [paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS 3.9 and 3.14].

ISSR Part 4, Suitability of staff, paragraphs 18 to 21

- Ensure that checks of medical fitness are undertaken on all staff, as identified at the previous inspection [paragraph 18 (2)(c)(ii); EYFS 3.9].
- Ensure that these checks and those for identity, qualifications and right to work in the United Kingdom are completed prior to members of staff starting work [paragraph 18 (3); EYFS 3.9].
- Ensure that the single central register of appointments records that all the required checks on staff have been undertaken and specifically the dates the checks took place [paragraph 21(3)(a)(i-vii) and (b); EYFS 3.12].

ISSR Part 5, Premises of and accommodation at schools (maintenance), paragraph 25

- Ensure that all the requirements relating to the maintenance of premises and accommodation are met [paragraph 25; EYFS 3.4 and 3.62].

ISSR Part 6, Provision of information, paragraph 32

- Ensure that the safeguarding policy currently in use in the school is published on the school website and remove the previous, outdated policy written in January 2019 [paragraph 32 (1)(c)].

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

- Ensure that leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and have the time to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and that they actively promote the well-being of the pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].
- Ensure that training in regulatory matters is implemented effectively [paragraph 34 (1)(a), (b) and (c)].
- Ensure that governance and its structures provide suitable proprietorial oversight by:
 - reviewing current practice;
 - and remedying current shortcomings in understanding regulatory requirements and monitoring practice within the school [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, DSL, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the proprietor. They visited different areas of the school. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.