



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION
FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION
RIDDLESWORTH HALL SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2017



School's details

School	Riddlesworth Hall School			
DfE Number	926/6000			
Address	Riddlesworth Hall Hall Lane Diss Norfolk IP22 2TA			
Telephone number	01953 681246			
Email address	hmsec@riddlesworthhall.com			
Principal	Mrs. Susan Hayes			
Proprietor	Col. Keith Boulter			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	77			
	Boys	38	Girls	39
	Day pupils	61	Boarders	16
	EYFS	24	Pre-Prep	13
	Prep	40		
Pupils' ability	Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is broadly average.			
Pupils' needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is seven. They require support with dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorder and Downs Syndrome. One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. 16 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive support for development of English.			
History of the school	The school was founded in 1946 and occupies a large Victorian house situated on a site of over thirty acres approximately ten miles from the town of Diss.			
Ownership and governing structure	The school is owned by the Confucius International Education Group and has an English/Chinese			

	management structure. The previous owner maintains an oversight of the governance of the school.
School structure	The school is split into three sections: the EYFS for pupils from two to five years of age, the Pre-prep for pupils from five to eight years old and the Prep for pupils from eight to thirteen.
Other useful information	The school provides accommodation for full, part-time and flexible boarders from the age of seven to thirteen.
Inspection dates	28 February to 01 March 2017

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards (“the standards”) in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school’s accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school’s most recent statutory inspection.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (‘boarding NMS’). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards, including the boarding NMS, following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school’s compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils’ health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents’ complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management, together with the NMS covering the same areas. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The 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.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable and suitable provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.

An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities.

The proprietor has not undertaken a review of the safeguarding policy and procedures in order to remedy any weaknesses. The school has not received declarations of 'disqualification from childcare by association' from all staff who work with children under eight years of age. References for staff have not always been received or have been received late. The school has not implemented their health and safety policy by not undertaking specific checks on play equipment in the time frame stated, not identifying a health and safety manager and not forming a health and safety committee as the policy requires. Recommendations from external surveys, for example for asbestos and legionella testing have not been considered or implemented.

The school has not updated the school fire risk assessment since 2015, not all staff have received updated fire training, and recommendations from an external contractor have not been addressed. Emergency lighting has not been checked in a suitable time frame.

The standards on Implementation of the health and safety policy and of fire precautions NMS 6.1, (Health and Safety), 7.1, (Fire Precautions) and 14.4 (Supervision of visitors to boarding accommodation) are not met and represent a failure to safeguard boarders.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9 (a to c), 10, 13, 14 and 16 the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 and NMS 6.3 (risk assessment) and 7.2 (fire drills) are met. Those in paragraphs 7.(a) and (b) (Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils) and 8(a) and (b) (Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders), 11 (drawing up and effective implementation of a relevant health and safety policy) and 12 (Compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005) and in NMS 6.1 (Health and Safety policy and implementation), 6.2 (premises) and 7.1 (fire precautions) are not met.

Action point 1

- Ensure that all the required checks are carried out on new staff before they start work and that governance undertakes an annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures in order to remedy any weaknesses [paragraph 7.(a) and (b) and 8.(a) and (b) under Welfare, Health and Safety and NMS 11 Child Protection].

Action Point 2

- Ensure that the school health and safety policy is implemented in full, appropriate records kept and procedures monitored for effectiveness [paragraph 11 under Welfare, Health and Safety and NMS 6.1, (Safety of Boarders) and NMS 14.4 (Supervision of visitors to boarding accommodation)].

Action Point 3

- Ensure full compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 [paragraph 12 under Welfare, Health and Safety and NMS 7.1 Fire Precautions]

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The required recruitment checks have not been undertaken. Teaching staff have started work before a medical declaration has been made and prohibition from teaching and management clearance has been obtained. In cases where the Disclosure and Barring List was late the school have not undertaken their own Barred List check before the member of staff began work. Checks on existing staff, such as declarations of medical fitness have not been undertaken. The single central register of appointments is inaccurately completed, with required entries omitted and many entries not dated.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 18.(2)(c) and (f) 18.(3), 21.(3)(a)(ii) and (iii), 21.(3)(b) and NMS 14.1 and 14.4 are not met.

Action point 4

- **Ensure that before staff begin their employment, medical fitness checks are undertaken, and that prohibition checks are obtained for teaching staff appointed since 1 April 2012 and prohibition checks for those in management positions since 12 August 2015. It must carry out the required checks such as declarations of medical fitness, on existing members of staff. The school must ensure that the single central register is accurately maintained to include the dates on which all checks have been made. [paragraphs 18.(2)(c) and (f) 18.(3), 21.(3)(a)(ii) and (iii), 21.(3)(b) under Suitability of staff and proprietors and NMS 14.1 and 14.4 under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults].**

PART 5

Premises of and accommodation at schools

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.

PART 6

Provision of information

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The owners and proprietor have not discharged their responsibilities for ensuring that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and that the regulatory standards are consistently met. They have not actively promoted the well-being of the pupils. The recruitment procedures and maintenance of the single central register of staff appointments were found to be deficient. There has been insufficient rigour in ensuring the implementation of the school's policies, including those for child protection, health and safety and fire safety.

The standards relating to leadership and management of the school in sub-paragraphs 34.(1)(a), (b), and (c) and NMS 13 are not met.

Action point 5

- **the school must ensure that the proprietor and senior managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding are consistently met, and that they provide for the well-being of all pupils. [paragraph 34.(1)(a),(b) and (c) and NMS 13 under Quality of leadership and management in schools].**

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Inspectors held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the principal and proprietor. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Diane Gardiner	Reporting inspector
Mr Jody Wells	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Sarah Hollingsworth	Co-ordinating inspector for boarding (Head of pre-prep, HMC school)