



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

Riddlesworth Hall School

October 2020



School's details

School	Riddlesworth Hall School		
DfE number	926/6000		
Address	Riddlesworth Hall School Hall Lane Diss Norfolk IP22 2TA		
Telephone number	01953 681246		
Email address	hmsec@riddlesworth-hall.com		
Acting Headteacher	Mr Andrew Bentley		
Proprietor	Confucius International Education Group		
Age range	2 to 13		
Number of pupils on roll	100		
	Day pupils	100	Boarders 0
	Pre-Prep	43	Prep 57
Date of visit	5 October 2020		

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Riddlesworth Hall School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between three and thirteen years. Founded in 1946, it is situated ten miles from Diss, in Norfolk, and is owned and governed by the Confucius International Education Group.
- 1.2 The school is made up of three sections: the EYFS for children aged between two and five years, the pre-prep for pupils aged between five and eight years, and the prep for pupils aged from eight to thirteen years. It is registered as a boarding school but at the time of the inspection no boarders were present in the school. The school has identified 11 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has an education, health and care plan. No pupil has English as an additional language.
- 1.3 An acting head was appointed in March 2020. A single director is on site at the school for business purposes representing the proprietary group. A new chair of the advisory board was appointed in July 2020, the sole member of this body at the time of the inspection.

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 5 to 6 February 2020. The DfE asked for additional matters relating to safeguarding to be considered.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) & 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	Met
Part 3, requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan).	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18, 20 and 21 (suitability of staff and proprietors and the single central register of appointments); NMS 14	Met
Part 5, paragraph 25 (maintenance); NMS 6	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (quality of leadership and management); NMS 13	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11]

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 standard.
- 2.4 Safeguarding arrangements with due regard to current statutory guidance are now implemented. After the previous inspection the school was required to ensure that the school undertakes an annual review of its safeguarding policy and procedures. In addition the school was required to ensure that all recruitment checks are completed for all staff and governors before they begin work at the school and that associated evidence is kept appropriately in staff files. These requirements have been satisfactorily completed.
- 2.5 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy (DDSL) are appropriately trained in line with local procedures and have sufficient status as deputy heads to undertake their roles with the required authority and independence. All staff have received training in line with the Norfolk safeguarding recommendations and records of training are kept. Induction training for new staff is thorough. The school has a suitable code of conduct for staff and whistleblowing policy and staff demonstrate an effective understanding of their content, and of the safeguarding training they have received. The system used to report concerns is efficient and any recent concerns have been handled quickly, with action taken according to the school policy. Appropriate arrangements are made for handling allegations against adults working in the school. Liaison with external agencies is effective. Pupils understand who to go to with a concern, feel they are listened to and receive an appropriate response. They report feeling safe in school.
- 2.6 The newly appointed chair of the advisory board also has responsibility as the safeguarding governor. The chair has suitable knowledge and experience for the role and has undertaken a recent review of the safeguarding policy. Regular meetings are held with the DSLs, senior management and staff to offer support and advice.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – accessibility plan [Requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010]

- 2.7 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.8 The school now has a suitable accessibility plan for the period 2020 to 2023. The plan has been reviewed and takes into account pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents. Evidence demonstrates that a number of planned actions have been completed including improved ramps and handrails and that further aids for pupils with SEND are under review.

Suitability of staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18, 20 and 21; NMS 14]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors, including for medical fitness, identity, the right to work in the UK, prohibition from teaching and qualifications, and maintains a suitable single central register on which to record the checks and the dates on which they were made. Staff files contain the required information and are well organised. Further training for staff involved in recruitment and in the maintenance of a suitable register has been effective.

Premises and accommodation – maintenance [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25; NMS 6]

- 2.11 The school meets the standard.
- 2.12 The school has dealt satisfactorily with the requirement of the previous inspection to maintain the premises in such a way to keep pupils safe on the site. Improved security has been implemented with regards to access to classrooms.

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

- 2.13 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 13]

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 The senior leadership and proprietary group demonstrate good skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently. A suitable review of policies and procedures has taken place by the senior management team and the chair of the advisory board. Oversight of safeguarding and recruitment is now more robust. The recent appointment of an advisory board to support senior management and monitor their effectiveness has ensured that the school now meets the standards and actively promotes pupils' well-being.

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, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of the advisory board. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.