

DOVER COLLEGE

Effingham Crescent, Dover, Kent, CT17 9HR

20 June 2016

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dover College is a boarding and day school for boys and girls from the ages of 3 to 18. Founded in 1871 and reconstituted by Royal Charter in 1923, it is based in the grounds of a former Benedictine priory in the centre of Dover. The school is run as a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors. At the time of the visit, the school had 310 pupils on roll (174 boys and 136 girls), of whom 95 were boarders. The school is divided into four sections: early years, for children from the age of 3 to 5; infants and juniors, for pupils aged 5 to 11; the senior school, for pupils from the age of 11 to 16; and the sixth form for those in their final two years of secondary education. The school has 38 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of whom have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, and 61 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school appointed a new headmaster in January 2015, and two new deputy headteachers in September 2015. The school's last full inspection was in November 2014. An unannounced emergency visit took place in September 2015.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This was an announced visit at the request of the Department for Education to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the unannounced emergency visit on 21 September 2015. The focus of the visit was on welfare, health and safety, particularly safeguarding and the provision of information to parents. Additionally, the visit focused on the manner in which complaints are handled and the quality of leadership and management.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b), and 8 (a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 to 3.8] and provision of information to parents [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32 (1) (c)]

PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PARENTS

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.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The school meets the requirements.

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

The school meets the Regulations, the Standard and the EYFS requirements.

The school manages safeguarding effectively. It has completely overhauled its safeguarding procedures and practice since the previous inspection and the unannounced inspection visit in September 2015. The school's safeguarding policy has taken into consideration all of the action points outlined at the previous visit and now fully meets requirements. The school's senior leadership structure has been reorganised and strengthened through the appointment of two new deputy headteachers, one of whom has responsibility for the pastoral welfare of the pupils and now undertakes the role of designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for the whole school, assisted by a deputy DSL who is head of the junior school and is the nominated safeguarding lead for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). A nominated safeguarding governor oversees the school's procedures, liaises with the DSL and other members of the governing body, and ensures that the governing body reviews the safeguarding policy and procedures at least annually.

The safeguarding policy provides appropriate support for pupils' needs and has full regard for the government's guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015)*. It provides clear guidance to staff on what to do should there be any safeguarding concerns about a child. It outlines an appropriate code of conduct for staff and refers to the much more detailed guidance which is now available in the school's new staff handbook. The school liaises effectively with local agencies and follows the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff are fully aware of the school's procedures. They know what to do should there be a concern about a particular child or an allegation against a member of staff.

Staff are appropriately trained. Those responsible for leading safeguarding have attended the required training courses. Staff who are new to the school receive training in safeguarding on their induction to the school. All staff have read and understood Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015)*. Safeguarding training for all staff is updated regularly. Staff acknowledge that the training they have received during the current school year has given them a much greater insight than before into the school's safeguarding procedures and made them more aware of how to spot signs of potential abuse and what to do if they have any concerns. They are aware of the school's whistleblowing procedures. Records are maintained of staff training which has taken place and who has attended, although systems for monitoring staff attendance are not particularly rigorous. The school has strengthened its procedures to ensure robust mechanisms for listening to pupils and then for providing appropriate support where necessary. The DSL maintains careful records and liaises with parents when concerns are identified. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, that they are supported well by the staff, and that they are taught how to keep themselves safe. They indicate that the school operates stringent measures to keep them when using the internet and they are fully aware of the dangers of social media.

The manner in which complaints are handled [ISSRs Part 7, paragraph 33, and NMS 18]

The school has an appropriate policy for the handling of complaints which is made available to parents. The policy sets out clear timescales for the management of a complaint. It allows for complaints to be made and considered initially on an informal basis. It establishes a formal procedure for a complaint to be made in writing. It makes provision for a hearing before a panel of at least three people should the complainant not be satisfied with the formal response received. The governing body ensures that the school follows its policy carefully, and that it keeps a meticulous written record of all formal complaints, noting whether or not they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing, and outlining the action taken as a result of a complaint. Parents may obtain information about the number of complaints received on request from the school. Pupils feel that there is always a member of staff to whom they can talk and that their concerns listened to and treated fairly.

The quality of leadership and management [ISSRs Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 13.1 – 13.6]

The school meets the Regulation and the Standard.

The school's leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently. They actively promote the well-being of pupils, including boarders, by providing a safe school environment which promotes pupils' achievement and personal development.

The school's leadership has responded positively to the action points identified at the previous inspection. It has gone well beyond ensuring that the school's safeguarding policy contains all the required information by strengthening the leadership of safeguarding and improving the training provided for staff. As a result, all staff have a much clearer understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures and are better equipped than before to deal with any safeguarding issues or allegations against members of staff.

The governing body has improved its oversight of safeguarding and actively promotes the well-being of pupils. It is kept well informed about any issues with regard to safeguarding and complaints by the school's senior leaders. The nominated governor for safeguarding has a clear understanding of his role and provides helpful advice as well as holding the DSL to account.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

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.