



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Additional Inspection Report

The Hammond

July 2023

School's details

School name	The Hammond School		
DfE number	896/6016		
Registered charity number	1022427		
Address	The Hammond School Mannings Lane Hoole Village Chester Cheshire CH2 4ES		
Telephone number	01244 305350		
Email address	contact@thehammond.co.uk		
Principal	Ms Jennifer Roscoe		
Chair of directors	Mrs Kathy Cowell OBE		
Proprietor	The Hammond School Ltd		
Age Range	11 to 19		
Number of pupils on roll	220		
	Day pupils	112	Boarders 108
	Juniors	120	Seniors 100
Date of inspection	4 July 2023		

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 The Hammond is a co-educational day and boarding school situated a short distance from the centre of Chester. The school specialises in the performing arts and is organised into two sections: the juniors for pupils aged 11 to 16 years and the seniors for those aged 16 to 19. The school is overseen by a charitable trust and is run by a board of directors who are also trustees of the charity. The school has 13 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two pupils have an education, health and care plan. Fifteen pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in September 2021.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced additional inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour); NMS 15	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying); NMS 16	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 9	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 (checking of members of staff) and 19 (checking of supply staff); NMS 19	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints procedure)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

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

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 The school implements its policy effectively to ensure the safeguarding of the pupils, including in boarding. Pupils, including younger boarders, are confident to report their safeguarding concerns to trusted adults in the school. Those who spoke to inspectors were confident in the ability of the school pastoral team to support them. Boarders felt that they are able to speak to a sufficient number of adults in the boarding houses and to share their views, but that further time is needed for them to build up the same level of trust with more recently appointed boarding staff. School records confirm the readiness of staff to listen to pupils and that staff act suitably upon their concerns. Changes in processes and staffing in recent years have contributed to the positive changes in school culture reported by staff and pupils. Leaders implement appropriate procedures in response to allegations against adults working in the school, including those which are identified as being at a low level. Staff interviewed demonstrated a suitably strong understanding of the school's expectations of their behaviour. They understood how to report any concerns to senior leaders and the governing body and were confident of appropriate action being taken in response.
- 2.5 The school maintains detailed records of concerns about pupils' safeguarding, liaising with parents and external agencies when appropriate. Incidents of child-on-child abuse or involving the use of alcohol or vaping are limited in number and are dealt with in line with the school's stated procedures. Pupils and staff spoke of a positive culture of inclusion in the school, including with regard to those pupils with protected characteristics. Records confirm that the few instances of discriminatory behaviour reported have been dealt with appropriately and sensitively. The school is alert to the specific vulnerabilities of pupils in relation to their mental health and SEND needs, and with regard to the performing arts specialism of the school. Staff, including those in leadership roles are appropriately trained. The directors, who are suitably trained in safeguarding, exercise effective oversight through regular contact with the school and through an annual review of policy and practice. When behavioural or safeguarding incidents occur the directors review these and require suitable improvement.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 15]

- 2.6 The school meets the standards.
- 2.7 The school promotes good behaviour through the drawing up and implementation of an effective behaviour policy. Instances of poor behaviour are largely at a low level, including those recorded amongst younger boarders. Records demonstrate a thorough approach in recording behavioural concerns in both the school and boarding environments. All cases involving other pupils are considered in the light of safeguarding so as to ensure appropriate responses for the benefit of both alleged victims and perpetrators. Sanctions, including exclusions, are issued in accordance with the

school's stated policy. This includes widespread use of individual support and restorative strategies, which are tailored to pupils' pastoral and SEND needs.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10; NMS 16]

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.
- 2.9 The school prevents bullying as far as reasonably practicable through the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying policy. Instances of unkindness between pupils are investigated with suitable care and sensitivity, including consideration of the impact of boarding on pupil relationships. Only a small number have, appropriately, been identified, as bullying. Pupils' pastoral needs are taken into account and restorative strategies are used to good effect in ensuring that low-level concerns do not escalate. Appropriate consideration is given to the safeguarding context of instances of bullying. School records confirmed the strong understanding of staff interviewed of the potential links between bullying and child on child abuse.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 9]

- 2.10 The school meets the standards.
- 2.11 The school's workplace environment supports staff wellbeing and the safety of staff, pupils and visitors. Staff interviewed were confident in the efficacy of the processes in place for them to report concerns to school leaders and to those outside the school within the whistleblowing process. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure boarders are suitably supervised on buses from the school to the boarding houses.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 9]

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 The school implements a systematic approach to the assessment and mitigation of the risks associated with the safeguarding of pupils in the school. This includes the risks associated with child protection concerns, pupils' SEND needs and the recruitment of staff, including in boarding.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 and 19; NMS 19]

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and supply staff. Records confirm that staff, including those working in the boarding houses, have appropriate experience and qualifications for their roles. Those working in the boarding houses are recruited in accordance with the school's stated recruitment procedures.

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

- 2.16 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.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33]

- 2.17 The school meets the standard.
- 2.18 The school implements a suitable procedure for recording and responding to parental complaints which meets the requirements of the standard.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 The governing body includes directors with a suitable range of experience and expertise so as to ensure knowledgeable and effective oversight of the school. Those working in boarding are suitably monitored in their roles by school leaders. School leaders and managers have appropriate skills and knowledge to ensure the standards are consistently met and the wellbeing of the pupils is actively promoted, including in boarding.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

4. Summary of evidence

4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a governor. They talked with groups of pupils and scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mrs Karen Williams

Reporting inspector

Mr Christopher Emmott

Assistant reporting inspector