



**Additional Inspection Report**

**Wycombe Abbey School**

**June 2024**

## School's details

<b>School name</b>	Wycombe Abbey School			
<b>DfE number</b>	825/6018			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	310638			
<b>Address</b>	Wycombe Abbey School Frances Dove Way High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP11 1PE			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 520381			
<b>Email address</b>	headmistress@wycombeabbey.com			
<b>Headmistress</b>	Mrs Jo Duncan			
<b>Chair of proprietors</b>	Mr Peter Warren			
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Girls Education Co Ltd			
<b>Age Range</b>	10 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	643			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	70	<b>Boarders</b>	573
	<b>Seniors</b>	456	<b>Sixth Form</b>	187
<b>Date of inspection</b>	18 June 2024			

# 1. Introduction

## Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Wycombe Abbey School is an independent boarding and day school for female pupils located in the centre of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. It is owned by the Girls' Education Company Limited, a registered charity, whose directors constitute the school's governing council. The school has 118 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils have an education, health and care plan and 96 speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a combined educational quality and regulatory compliance inspection in June 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, paragraph 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraphs 9 (behaviour) and 10 (bullying); NMS 15 and 16	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision); NMS 20	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	<b>Met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	<b>Met</b>

## 2. Inspection findings

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [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 implementation of all aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support for the needs of pupils, including those in boarding.
- 2.5 Discussions with safeguarding leaders and review of documentation confirmed that both staff and pupils receive suitable guidance on how to address issues when they arise. They receive appropriate support in doing so. Staff, including senior leaders, listen to the views of the pupils effectively, through various systems including the appropriate availability of house and other pastoral staff. Pupils spoken to confirmed this and said that the school responds to all issues quickly and takes action when needed. Records of safeguarding confirm that the school acts appropriately in any situation that arises. Safeguarding leaders act straight away on any early signs of risk or potential vulnerability and monitor pupils through clear and comprehensive safeguarding systems.
- 2.6 Staff demonstrate correct knowledge of the safeguarding procedures including those for whistleblowing, children missing in education and the code of conduct for staff. The school procedures are implemented effectively to safeguard pupils at risk and those in need. The particular vulnerability of pupils with SEND, including those who are neurodiverse, is understood and these pupils receive appropriate support for their welfare and education. Staff show suitable understanding of their responsibilities and have a thorough knowledge of the thresholds for reporting potential issues, including child-on-child abuse. Staff are aware of who to go to if they have a concern or receive a disclosure and that they can make a direct referral to children's services if necessary.
- 2.7 The safeguarding policy provides contact details for outside agencies. Suitable recruitment procedures for staff are outlined in the policy and the safeguarding and human resources team work closely together to implement these. The training for staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities is in line with local requirements and statutory advice. Training for all staff is of sufficient frequency and quality. Central records of training content and attendance are comprehensive.
- 2.8 There is effective oversight by the governors, who are suitably trained in safeguarding. They carry out an annual review of safeguarding and liaise effectively with the safeguarding team. When serious incidents occur, governors ensure appropriate review takes place. Together with senior leaders, they institute, implement and monitor appropriate changes to safeguarding and welfare procedures.
- 2.9 The school has a suitable relationship with outside agencies and works with and refers appropriately to both children's services and the local authority designated safeguarding officer (LADO). Suitable arrangements are in place for handling allegations against staff and are included within the safeguarding policy. Suitably detailed records show that procedures are followed. Behavioural and safeguarding records are comprehensive. Senior leaders understand potential links between bullying or poor behaviour and safeguarding, including sexualised behaviour. Thresholds for referring such incidents to external agencies are understood. Any incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are handled

appropriately with due care taken to safeguard the welfare of all. Pupils are supported in learning how to keep themselves safe, including online. Monitoring and filtering of technology is effective.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour and bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 9 and 10; NMS 15 and 16]]**

2.10 The school meets the standards.

2.11 The school has a clear and suitable rewards and sanctions policy and an anti-bullying strategy that are available to parents and pupils. These are implemented effectively. Suitable sanctions are imposed for any use of substances not allowed in school or misuse of alcohol. All staff use an electronic system of recording and monitoring. This enables staff to implement the policy effectively and support pupils appropriately, including those with SEND. Records are kept which allow suitable monitoring and oversight by governors and senior leaders. Where any incidents require review of the school's practice in implementing sanctions or other aspects of the behaviour policy this takes place appropriately. Any necessary changes identified are put into practice effectively.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 20]**

2.12 The school meets the standards.

2.13 There is a suitable supervision policy that covers procedures to supervise all pupils at various times of the school day and at weekends. It is clear about where the responsibility lies for supervising both boarding and day pupils at various times. It provides for suitable awareness by staff of any pupils who are vulnerable. There are comprehensive rotas and processes covering all times that the pupils are the responsibility of the school, including when off site. Supervision of boarders at night is effective.

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

2.14 The school meets the standards.

2.15 Leaders and managers have created an effective culture for the assessment of risk at the school which is embedded into everyday practice. The school has an overall whole school risk assessment policy which underpins all school operations and its buildings and premises. This is systematically monitored and overseen by the governors of the school. The school mitigates any risk identified in all that it undertakes.

2.16 There are risk assessments for all activities and all individual buildings at the school, including those used for accommodation of pupils. There is appropriate assessment of the safety of all building materials used on site, suitably informed by knowledge of the potential risks of certain types of material.

2.17 Welfare risk assessments are made for vulnerable pupils. These are managed by the safeguarding team and are tailored for each individual. They involve input from all those who support the individual pupil. There are multiple systems in operation to ensure each pupil for whom a specific risk is identified is appropriately supported in their school life.

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

2.18 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 2]**

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 The leadership and management manage safeguarding and welfare arrangements effectively and monitor compliance with the standards and other statutory advice. They implement suitable policies, practices and procedures to enable this. Both governors and senior leaders undertake effective review following any serious incidents which occur. They identify and implement any necessary changes to procedures effectively. The leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are consistently met and the pupils' wellbeing 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 the chair and other governors. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.