



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

St Bede's College

October 2021

School's details

School	St Bede's College			
DfE number	352/6032			
Registered charity number	700808			
Address	St Bede's College Alexandra Park Manchester M16 8HX			
Telephone number	0161 226 3323			
Email address	enquiries@stbedescollege.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Pike			
Chair of governors	Mr Xavier Bosch			
Age range	3 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	740			
	EYFS	24	Juniors	137
	Seniors	579		
Date of visit	14 to 15 October 2021			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 St Bede's College is an independent Roman Catholic co-educational day school located in Whalley Range, three miles from Manchester city centre. The school has changed ownership since the previous inspection and is now overseen by St Bede's College Foundation through a board of governors. A new chair of governors has also been appointed. The school has identified 96 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil has an education, health and care plan and there are 33 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in May 2019.

Purpose of the visit

- 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 requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework. The inspection was asked to focus specifically on the school's provision for, and implementation and teaching of, personal, social, moral, economic education (PSMEE) and relationships and sex education (RSE).

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 2 (curriculum) and 2(A) (relationships and sex education)	Met
Part 1, paragraph 3 (teaching)	Met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum, and relationships and sex education [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2 and 2A]

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 The school has undertaken a complete revision of its PSHE and RSE programmes in response to statutory requirements, resulting in a comprehensive scheme of work, appropriate for the school's Catholic foundation but with due regard to other faith and belief systems. It takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Care has been taken to ensure that it does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The scheme has been drawn up in consultation with pupils, parents and staff, whose views were taken into consideration. Although a few older pupils, in response to inspection questionnaires, were negative about their experience of PSHE, inspection interviews showed this to be mainly because the views were based on the previous provision. In interviews, pupils' responses showed that there is now a sharper focus on PSHE and RSE, both through assemblies and the teaching of topics in the classroom. The programme reflects the school's aims and ethos, encourages respect for other people, including between genders, and pays due regard to the protected characteristics which are set out in the Equality Act 2010. It recognises the gendered nature of harmful sexual behaviours and aims to support pupils so that they feel safe about options for disclosure. It effectively includes topics such as consent, relationships and sexual harassment. The programme is founded on creating a safe classroom environment and setting firm ground rules for discussion. It is designed so that topics are revisited in subsequent years in order to build up deeper understanding.
- 2.3 Co-ordinators for PSHE have produced effective guidance for all staff who teach the subject and have provided suitable resources for all of the topics covered. The programme is taught through dedicated PSHE lessons and key elements of the programme are reinforced through form tutor periods and assemblies. All pupils in the prep school, including the EYFS, are provided with relationships education and all pupils from Year 7 onwards are provided with relationships and sex education, including in the sixth form. The RSE components which are incorporated into the PSHE programme fulfil the requirements set out in relevant statutory guidance.

Quality of education provided – teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 3]

- 2.4 The school meets the standard.
- 2.5 Teaching of the PSHE and RSE programmes enables pupils to gain knowledge and understanding, to acquire personal and social skills and to develop positive attitudes and values. It is well planned, age appropriate and shows a good understanding of pupils' needs. The resources used are suitable and effectively engage pupils' interest. In interviews, pupils spoke positively about the range of activities they experienced, including discussions and scenario-based approaches. They identified a range of topics already covered which reflect an appropriate range in the RSE teaching they are receiving. Pupils' work is assessed appropriately to ensure that the materials used enable them to progress at a rate that is in keeping with their needs and experiences. Teaching does not undermine fundamental British values; nor does it discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.6 The school meets the standard.
- 2.7 Through its programme of assemblies, visiting speakers and the PSHE curriculum, the school successfully promotes mutual respect and tolerance of others, including those with different beliefs and/or cultures and between genders. This was evident from pupils' responses in discussion. They consider the school to be a tolerant community where respect for one another develops appropriately with age and maturity. The school enables pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, and it successfully develops their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]**Safeguarding policy**

- 2.8 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 The safeguarding policy is implemented effectively throughout the school. It is supported by suitable safer recruitment and whistleblowing policies, and an appropriate staff code of conduct. Suitable procedures are in place to listen to pupils, who confirm that they feel safe and have sufficient opportunities and channels to express concerns. When they do so, they are confident that they will be supported appropriately, and suitable action will be taken. The school liaises promptly and effectively with the local safeguarding children partnership (LSP), in line with local procedures, to safeguard children in need or at risk. Discussion with staff confirmed that they understand their responsibilities to safeguard children, including those with SEND. They readily share and record concerns and know that they can make a direct referral to children's services if necessary. They understand current definitions of abuse and recognise the vulnerability of pupils with SEND. Records show that, on joining the school, new members of staff receive appropriate induction. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs have the required levels of up-to-date advanced training for their roles, including training in mental health and pupils' well-being. The DSL ensures that all staff receive regular formal training in line with LSP requirements and informal updates on safeguarding practice and issues. Records of this training are systematically kept and show that the training for all staff is current and appropriate.
- 2.12 Suitable procedures are in place to deal with allegations against adults working with children, and correct referral of such allegations is made to the appropriate bodies. In interview, pupils demonstrated a clear awareness of the dangers of social media and the use of the internet. Appropriate filtering systems are applied for the use of technology, and suitable arrangements were made to promote the safeguarding of pupils online during the COVID-19 period of remote learning. Governors provide effective support for designated safeguarding staff, and the school's safeguarding policy and practice are reviewed annually by the governing body.
- 2.13 Staff and governors have been trained to understand, identify and respond appropriately to incidences of sexual harassment, sexual violence, including online sexual abuse, and peer-on-peer sexual abuse and fulfil their responsibilities in these areas. The school works effectively in this regard with the LSP and is aware of the range of support available to children and young people who are victims or who perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour. The school has taken prompt and decisive action

to refine its policies and practice, in effective liaison with the LSP, in the light of current issues surrounding racism, harmful sexual behaviour and protected characteristics. It takes appropriate and unbiased action to deal with any instances of such behaviours.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standard.
- 2.15 The school has an appropriate written behaviour policy which sets out the standards it expects of pupils. It incorporates a suitable system of rewards, for when pupils reach these standards, and the sanctions to be adopted in the event of misbehaviour. The policy is based on respect and consideration for all members of the school community.
- 2.16 All of the groups interviewed during the inspection spoke of the prevalence of kindness to others, mostly polite and courteous behaviour, and pupils' respect for one another and for their teachers. Discussion with pupils and staff and scrutiny of supporting documentation indicates that the school has a behavioural approach, including sanctions, to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated. The school keeps separate records and analyses incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to counter abuse.

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

- 2.17 The school meets the standard.
- 2.18 The school has an appropriate policy for bullying which sets out clearly the measures taken to prevent it, and those taken to deal with bullying when it occurs. This is implemented effectively. Staff receive appropriate training and pupils receive effective guidance about bullying. They understand their responsibility for reporting any instances of bullying, and records show that this happens in practice, although cases of bullying are rare. Resolution of bullying incidents involves discussion with both perpetrator and victim, and parents of all parties are kept informed. Staff understand that such incidents may become safeguarding issues and may require the involvement of the police or children's services. Those with designated responsibilities understand the thresholds for such referrals.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14]

- 2.19 The school meets the standard.
- 2.20 Arrangements for the supervision of pupils at break, lunchtime, on moving around the school and on leaving the site at the end of the day are appropriate.

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

- 2.21 The school meets the standard.
- 2.22 The school safeguards and promotes the welfare of pupils by drawing up and implementing effectively a written risk assessment policy. This includes effective assessments of risk where a pupil has a particular educational or behavioural need, or there is a mental health concern. It takes appropriate action to mitigate any risks identified.

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

- 2.23 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]

- 2.24 The school meets the standard.
- 2.25 The school has an appropriate policy for the handling of complaints which it implements effectively. Scrutiny of the school's complaints log and supporting documentation indicates that due regard is given to concerns expressed by parents and that these are addressed within the specified time frames, including where the formal complaint procedure is invoked. Requirements relating to the conduct of panel hearings and the recording and confidentiality of information are met.

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

- 2.26 The school meets the standard.
- 2.27 Governance ensures that all those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role; that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively, and that they actively promote the well-being of pupils, so that the school meets the independent school standards consistently.
- 2.28 Governance, leadership and management actively promote a culture of respect for each other amongst pupils within the school, as well as respect for others beyond the school community.

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 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 a group of governors. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies. Evidence was also gained from questionnaires that were circulated to parents, pupils and staff.