

Ramillies Hall School

Ramillies Avenue, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 7AJ

Inspection dates

27 January 2016

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- This inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the inspection in June 2015 found that not all the regulations were met. It was carried out with no notice.
- The last inspection was carried out by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. It was an unannounced inspection focusing on the school's compliance with statutory regulations listed in the independent school standards, particularly those concerned with pupils' welfare, health and safety, and the effectiveness of leadership and management.
- Following the last inspection, the school submitted an action plan to the Department for Education. This was evaluated in November 2015 and judged to be acceptable.
- This inspection was conducted by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, who looked at aspects of the school's provision as requested by the Department for Education and covered by the school's action plan. He also took account of two complaints about the school received by the Department for Education.
- During this inspection, meetings were held with the joint principals, one of whom is a proprietor of the school, a group of staff and a group of pupils. The inspector toured the school, accompanied by one of the joint principals. He reviewed a wide range of school documentation, particularly that relating to safeguarding children and recruiting staff.

Main findings

- This inspection found that the school has implemented its action plan fully in order to meet the independent school standards.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The inspection in June 2015 found that school's safeguarding policy did not pay sufficient regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State and required the school to improve the wording and implementation of its safeguarding policy. The school's action plan included an undertaking to review the current safeguarding policy to identify any gaps in content and to ensure that the revised policy met all aspects of statutory guidance by the end of January 2016. The new policy (consisting of two documents, entitled 'Safeguarding Policy' and 'Safeguarding Procedure') satisfies all requirements.
- The last inspection specified the need to amend the safeguarding policy in several particular areas. These have all been addressed. In particular, the school's revised policy:
 - provides suitable details on the timescales for safeguarding referrals, including making clear where referrals need to be immediate
 - makes explicit that anybody can make a safeguarding referral
 - includes descriptions of the different kinds of child abuse
 - provides guidance on contacting the local authority designated officer in the event of an allegation concerning the Principal and states that, in such a case, the referral should be

made without informing the Principal

- includes details of the procedure to follow in the case of pupil-on-pupil abuse
- includes appropriate reference to the use of body maps in investigations.

The current wording for the procedure for contacting the local authority designated officer in the event of a complaint about the Principal contains some ambiguity and needs to be clarified further.

- The school's action plan included an intention to ensure that changes to the safeguarding policy were communicated effectively to school staff. The inspection found that knowledge of safeguarding procedures now has a suitably high priority in the school. Leaders have delivered training and, in consequence, staff are aware of the contents of the revised safeguarding policy and the associated safeguarding procedures. The relevant documents are publicly available on the school's website. Since the last inspection, staff have undertaken training in protecting pupils from the risk of developing extremist views. Paragraphs 7(a) and (b) of the independent school standards are now met in this respect.
- The last inspection found that risk assessments were not completed sufficiently well or monitored sufficiently at a senior level. The school indicated in its action plan that it would, by the end of January 2016, review its risk assessment policy to ensure that it met statutory guidance and provided a suitably robust process for educational visits. This inspection found that the school's revised policy includes clear guidance on what is expected, including in preparation for external trips and visits. A standard pro-forma has been produced, which provides a robust pre-visit checklist, and safety aspects of each trip are reviewed afterwards. Risk assessments are now monitored effectively by one of the joint principals.
- Staff recognise that risk assessments now have a higher priority than before. Staff training has ensured that they are aware of the revised procedures. Paragraphs 11 and 16 of the independent school standards are now met.
- The last inspection found that recruitment processes did not provide sufficient safeguards to ensure that applicants were suitable to work with children. The school, in its action plan, undertook to ensure that all references were received prior to new appointees starting work and that references confirmed candidates' suitability to work with children. The standard form for referees to complete has been appropriately adapted. Records of recent appointments demonstrate that references have been received prior to staff taking up appointments and confirm the candidate's suitability to work with children. Paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b) of the independent school standards are now met fully.
- In the light of two complaints about the school, the inspector paid particular attention to the safety of pupils. Issues raised in the complaints did not give rise to wider concerns. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and enjoy good relationships with staff. The inspector observed a calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons and around the school and pupils confirmed that this was typical.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

- The last inspection identified weaknesses in the school's checks on new staff and how it kept records of the checks made. The school, in its action plan, undertook to review the application of its recruitment policy and to ensure that its single central record of staff checks satisfied all requirements. In this inspection, the inspector scrutinised the school's single central record and found that it complied with all requirements. In particular, it recorded that checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service were carried out before recently appointed staff took up post. The school's leaders recognise that they may need to refer to the local authority designated officer if they feel that they need additional advice on staff suitability to work with children. Paragraphs 18(2)(d), 21(3) and 21(4) are now met.

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- The last inspection found that leaders and managers did not ensure that administrative activity efficiently supported the promotion of pupils' welfare. In consequence of this and other unmet requirements, the inspection found that leaders and managers did not fulfil their responsibilities

efficiently to ensure that the independent school standards were consistently met. In its action plan, the school undertook to standardise procedures throughout the school, to ensure compliance where appropriate and increase staff accountability for complying with the school's procedures. This inspection found that a wide range of school policies have been revised and that procedures for keeping records are more rigorously applied than before. The plan to reorganise the senior leadership team so that the school has two joint principals has helped to drive through reforms. In-house training means that staff are fully aware of where policies have been revised and their responsibilities for carrying out agreed policy. Paragraph 34(1)(c) is now met.

- Administrative activity now has an appropriate focus on pupils' welfare. For example, during this inspection, the information requested was readily available, the staff listed on the single central record matched the school's staff list and the school's records of which pupils were on roll matched the names on the attendance registers.
- Measures taken since the last inspection have focused on appropriate areas. As a result, the school now meets the independent school standards. Paragraph 34(1)(b) is now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and associated requirements, that the Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to inspect at this inspection. This included all standards and requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and requirements were checked during this inspection.

Inspection team

Paul Chambers, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Ramillies Hall School is a long-established school that currently caters for girls and boys aged between six months and 16 years. It operates on a large site in Cheadle Hulme, close to south Manchester.
- Nearly half of the pupils at the school are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Since the last inspection, the senior leadership team has been reorganised so that, instead of a single Principal, the school now has two joint principals. A new special educational needs coordinator took up post in January 2016.
- The school's membership of the Independent Association of Prep Schools ceased in December 2015 and, as a result, the school is now subject to inspection by Ofsted rather than the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

School details

Unique reference number	106150
Inspection number	10011286
DfE registration number	356/6008

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	Six months to 16 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietors	Diana Patterson and Anne Poole
Headteachers	Denise Anthony and Diana Patterson
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2015
Annual fees (day pupils)	Years 10–11 £9,198 Years 7–9 £9,000 Reception–Year 6 £8,340
Telephone number	0161 485 3804
Email address	study@ramillieshall.co.uk

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