



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Denstone College

June 2022

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School's Details

College	Denstone College			
DfE number	860/6003			
Registered charity number	1102588			
Address	Denstone College Denstone Uttoxeter Staffordshire ST14 5HN			
Telephone number	01889 590484			
Email address	head@denstonecollege.net			
Headteacher	Miss Lotte Tulloch			
Chair of governors	Professor Nigel Ratcliffe			
Age range	4 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	743			
	Day pupils	565	Boarders	178
	EYFS	7	Juniors	98
	Seniors	447	Sixth Form	191
Inspection dates	15 to 17 June 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Denstone College, located in the village of Denstone, Staffordshire is an independent co-educational boarding and day school. The school is a Christian foundation dating back to 1873. It is a limited company, a registered charity, and is wholly owned by the Woodard Corporation. It has a governing body whose members are directors of the company. Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded with the introduction of The Prep at Denstone College, located in the grounds of the College.
- 1.2 The current headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- 1.3 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to provide an environment where pupils are encouraged to achieve their full potential becoming ever more independent, resilient and confident, remaining true to the College's access to a Christian education so that they can play a useful role in society, leading fulfilling and purposeful lives.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from all areas of the Midlands and are largely from business and professional families. There are a number of overseas pupils, most of whom board full time. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability profile of the prep and senior school is above average compared to those taking the same test nationally. The school has identified 104 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 95 receive specialist learning support. There are five pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Of the 35 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), 17 receive specialist support in school.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Additionally, this visit serves as a material change visit to assess the school's proposal to increase capacity from 750 to 900 pupils. Boarding is offered from Year 7 upwards but will be offered to pupils from Year 3 upwards.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the prep school, National Curriculum tests in the year 2019 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the senior school, the school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2018 to 2021 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the prep school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.18 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.19 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.20 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

3. Recommendation with regard to material change request

Summary of findings

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

Safeguarding policy

- 3.1 Evidence from the regulatory compliance inspection (RCI) dated June 2022 confirms that the school meets the requirements.
- 3.2 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

- 3.3 Evidence from the regulatory compliance inspection (RCI) dated June 2022 confirms that the school has met the relevant standard.
- 3.4 The safeguarding policy is effectively implemented at all levels, including in boarding, and is likely to continue to meet the standard in the proposed increase in pupil capacity. The policy includes details of Prevent Duty guidance and is further supported by suitable policies covering the staff code of conduct, safe recruitment, whistleblowing and e-safety which are understood and implemented by staff. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has an effective relationship with local agencies and makes appropriate referrals. The DSL and deputy DSLs have the capacity to ensure effective safeguarding implementation regarding the proposed increase in pupil numbers. The safeguarding arrangements are reviewed annually by the governors who have appropriate knowledge, liaise closely with the DSL and maintain effective oversight. Pupils can express concerns, are listened to and receive appropriate support, including early help and there is due regard for their mental health. Staff understand peer-on-peer abuse and take appropriate action when incidents occur. Staff training in safeguarding, including for the DSL, is comprehensive including appropriate attention to handling allegations and online safety. Where allegations are made the school responds appropriately making prompt referral to external agencies, including the Disclosure and Barring Service and Teaching Regulation Agency.

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

- 3.5 Evidence from the regulatory compliance inspection (RCI) dated June 2022 confirms that the school has met the relevant standard.
- 3.6 The school is likely to continue to meet health and safety requirements with regard to the proposed increase in the number of pupils. The governors and senior leaders effectively oversee and monitor health and safety, and staff interviewed demonstrated a good understanding of health and safety matters. Suitable training regarding health and safety is in place for staff. Pupils feel that the school is a safe environment. Effective health and safety arrangements are in place for the extended premises and accommodation that are being completed.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12]

- 3.7 Evidence from the regulatory compliance inspection (RCI) dated June 2022 confirms that the school has met the relevant standard.
- 3.8 The school is likely to continue to meet the fire safety standard because the fire risk policy is implemented effectively, including for the additional premises related to the proposed material change. Recommended actions from the most recent fire assessment are appropriately prioritised and carried out in a timely manner. Staff receive appropriate fire safety training and demonstrate good

awareness of risks, prevention and procedures in a fire emergency. Regular fire drills are held, including during boarding time, and pupils are confident regarding evacuation procedures.

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

- 3.9 Evidence from the regulatory compliance inspection (RCI) dated June 2022 confirms that the school has met the relevant standard.
- 3.10 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard because suitable guidance and procedures are in place to ensure pupils are supervised effectively throughout the school day. Supervision arrangements for all pupils who would attend as a result of the proposed material change are suitable.

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

- 3.11 Evidence from the regulatory compliance inspection (RCI) dated June 2022 confirms that the school has met the relevant standard.
- 3.12 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard because there is an appropriate risk assessment policy which indicates that risk assessment is systematic and pays attention to key areas of risk and pupils' welfare, such as supervision, safety in laboratories, design technology classrooms, and on school trips. Staff are given relevant training and completed risk assessments are checked, monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21]

- 3.13 Evidence from the regulatory compliance inspection (RCI) dated June 2022 confirms that the school has met the relevant standard.
- 3.14 The school is likely to continue to meet the standards because it makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Recent appointments of staff in relation to the proposed material change have been conducted with due regard for all required checks in a timely manner.

Premises and accommodation – [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–30]

- 3.15 Evidence from the regulatory compliance inspection (RCI) dated June 2022 confirms that the school has met the relevant standards.
- 3.16 Toilet, washing and changing facilities; suitable accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils are suitable and sufficient, including for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. Premises are maintained to a good standard. Routine and emergency maintenance tasks are carried out efficiently. The maintenance team have sufficient capacity to ensure that recent additions to premises in relation to proposed increased pupil numbers are maintained to the same standard as pre-existing accommodation. The school is likely to continue to meet the standards around acoustics, internal and external lighting, drinking water and water supply, outdoor space for PE and play, including with regard to recent additional premises related to the proposed increased pupil numbers.

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

- 3.17 Evidence from the regulatory compliance inspection (RCI) dated June 2022 confirms that the school has met the relevant standard.
- 3.18 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard because the proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are met consistently, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. The leadership and management have prepared thoroughly regarding the proposed material change.

Recommendation

- 3.19 It is recommended that the material change request be approved.
- 3.20 The school will have enhanced its provision suitably regarding its proposal to increase capacity to 900 pupils from September 2022 and has met all regulatory standards in the regulatory compliance inspection dated June 2022.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, chapel and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Michael Evans	Reporting inspector
Mrs Olivera Raraty	Compliance team inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mrs Amy Lang	Team inspector for boarding (Housemistress, HMC school)
Miss Claire Preece	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Richard Lynn	Shadow (Head, ISA school)