



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

BIRCHFIELD SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2017



School's details

School	Birchfield School			
DfE Number	123616			
Registered charity number	528420			
Address	Harriot's Hayes Lane, Albrighton, Nr Wolverhampton, Shropshire WV7 3AF			
Telephone number	01902 372534			
Email address	office@birchfieldschool.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Hugh Myott			
Chair of governors	Mrs Tracy Carver			
Age range	4 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	151			
	Boys	85	Girls	66
	EYFS	20	Juniors	106
	Seniors	25		
Pupils' ability	The school does not use standardised tests. However, its own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average.			
Pupils' needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 45. Four have an education, health and care (EHC) plan with a range of needs including dyslexia. No pupils have English as an additional language (EAL).			
History of the school	Birchfield School was founded in 1935 as a preparatory school and in 1962 moved to its present site. The school is based in an Edwardian country house and purpose-built modern buildings, set in 20 acres of woods, gardens and playing fields.			
Ownership and governing structure	Birchfield Educational Trust Limited, which manages Birchfield School, is both a registered charity and also a registered company.			

School structure	The school has a board of governors, consisting of the Chairman and seven governors, who take responsibility for its overall management. The school has a pre-prep section and a prep section.
Other useful information	The school has capacity for boarding but is no longer registered with the DfE for boarding and has no boarders. The school does not have a registered EYFS setting.
Inspection dates	1 to 2 February 2017

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards (“the standards”) in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school’s most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school’s compliance with the standards. 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 in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

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.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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.

The standards relating to arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance are not met because the school failed to ensure that the checks on prohibition from teaching and on prohibition for management were made on all staff for whom they are required. Safeguarding records were incomplete and did not enable senior staff to track and monitor concerns. External advice was rarely sought. The deputy designated safeguarding lead has not been trained to the appropriate level. Records of staff training showed that some staff had not received appropriate training and there were no plans in place to address this issue. Not all staff understand and adhere to its code of conduct at all times.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9-16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but those in paragraph 7 [safeguarding] are not met.

Action point 1

- the school must ensure that all the required checks are made on all staff [Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and 7 (b)].

Action point 2

- the school must ensure that safeguarding concerns are appropriately documented and monitored with due regard to all DfE guidance [Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and 7 (b)].

Action point 3

- the school must ensure that external advice about potential safeguarding concerns is sought when required, that decisions to refer to the appropriate authorities are made in the light of that advice and that they are clearly documented [Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and 7 (b)].

Action point 4

- the school must ensure that all staff receive training and updates commensurate with their position within appropriate timescales; that these take account of local requirements and are fully implemented [Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and 7 (b)].

Action point 5

- the school must ensure that all staff adhere to its code of conduct at all times [Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and 7 (b)].

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

No person who teaches or manages the school, or who works in regulated activity, is prohibited from teaching or management or barred from working with children. The school makes other appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.

PART 5**Premises of and accommodation at schools**

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their 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.

The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6

Provision of information

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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 those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, 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.

The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

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.

The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The governing body has not ensured that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively because the standards relating to welfare, health and safety (paragraph 7) are not met and they have therefore failed to promote the well-being of pupils.

The standards relating to leadership and management of the school in sub-paragraphs (1)(a)(b)(c) are not met.

Action point 6

- **the school must ensure that school leaders, including the governing body, develop the skills and knowledge they need to equip them to fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that independent school regulations are fulfilled consistently and the well-being of the pupils is thus promoted [Part 8, paragraph 34 (1) (a), (b), and (c)].**

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Ms Kate Richards

Reporting inspector

Mr Simon Malkin

Compliance team inspector (Bursar, IAPS school)