

Progress monitoring inspection report

21 March 2025

The Elms School

Colwall

Malvern

Worcestershire

WR13 6EF

Inspection outcome

The school meets all the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection.

Inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR Paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b), 8(a) and 8(b); NMS 8.1 and 11; EYFS Safeguarding and welfare requirements 3.5, 3.6

1. Leaders ensure effective implementation of the school's safeguarding procedures. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is a senior leader with sufficient authority to carry out the role effectively. The safeguarding team meets regularly to monitor any concerns and ensure that pupils can access the support they need.
2. The school's safeguarding policy reflects statutory guidance and provides suitable detail about the arrangements to safeguard pupils and staff. The policy is effectively implemented, and leaders ensure that safeguarding records are detailed, thorough and stored securely. Leaders take timely and appropriate action, including referrals for early help and in response to advice from local authority children's services.
3. Leaders ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. Staff, including the DSL team, complete suitable training which reflects local requirements and statutory guidance. Staff understand what to do if they have any concerns that a pupil may be at risk from harm. Staff also understand the importance of reporting low-level concerns relating to the conduct of adults in school.
4. Governors maintain effective oversight of safeguarding. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding meets regularly with school leaders to review practice and ensure that procedures are implemented effectively and reflect statutory requirements.
5. Staff in the early years and those working in the boarding environment receive the same rigorous recruitment checks and safeguarding training as the wider school team. Leaders have updated the policy regarding the use of mobile phones in the early years. Clear signage is displayed throughout the setting to remind staff and visitors of the school's policy. Staff understand the procedures and how they help to protect children.
6. Leaders and boarding staff ensure that all additional regulatory requirements relating to boarders' safety and wellbeing are in place. Boarders are aware of their points of contact at all times during the day and regular contact with parents is facilitated. Leaders are mindful of time differences and make suitable arrangements for boarders whose families live abroad. Boarders know how to report any concerns they may have to trusted adults. Further support from external services such as the Children's Commissioner's Help at Hand service and two nominated independent listeners is made readily available. Boarders are provided with appropriate advocacy support whenever this is needed.
7. There are suitable filtering and monitoring systems in place in relation to the school's internet. The filtering system is tested for effectiveness on a regular basis. Alerts from the monitoring software are investigated by the safeguarding team. Records are clearly categorised with appropriate action and follow up to ensure that all members of the school community are safeguarded while they are online.
8. The school meets the Standards.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

ISSR Paragraphs 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(f), 18(3) and 18(4); NMS 19.1; EYFS 3.9 and 3.13

9. The school implements its safer recruitment policy effectively. Staff involved in the appointment of staff receive appropriate safer recruitment training. The required pre-appointment checks on day staff, boarding staff and governors are carried out effectively.
10. A single central record of all appointments is accurately maintained. All the required checks are completed prior to adults starting work and having contact with pupils. Staff personnel files are well organised and include a checklist which ensures all checks have been completed. If an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check is delayed, leaders put in place an appropriate risk assessment and relevant supervision and ensure that all other pre-appointment checks have been completed satisfactorily.
11. The school meets the Standards

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR Paragraph 32(1)(c); EYFS 3.5 and 3.6

12. The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school website.
13. The school meets the Standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c); NMS 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5

14. Leaders have effectively implemented the school's action plan to address the Standards which were not met at the previous inspection. They have liaised with external agencies to put in place a programme of training for leaders and staff to ensure that everyone involved in appointing new governors, staff, contractors and volunteers understands and adheres to the regulations relating to safer recruitment. Leaders have introduced a new set of protocols and training for staff in relation to mobile device usage in the early years setting.
15. Governors actively monitor the school's approach to safer recruitment by verifying all necessary checks for each new appointment. The board has also formally approved the new policy and procedure relating to mobile device usage in the early years. Governors ensure that leaders have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, actively promote the wellbeing of both day pupils and boarders and ensure that the Standards are met.
16. The school meets the Standards.

School details

School	The Elms School
Department for Education number	885/6001
Registered charity number	527252
Address	The Elms School Colwall, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR13 6EF
Phone number	01684 540344
Email address	office@theelmsschool.co.uk
Website	www.elmsschool.co.uk
Proprietor	The Elms (Colwall) Ltd
Chair	Mr James Rose
Headteacher	Mr Ed Lyddon
Age range	3 to 13
Number of pupils	158
Number of boarding pupils	64
Number of children in the early years	15
Date of previous inspection	30 April to 2 May 2024

Information about the school

18. The Elms school is a coeducational day and boarding school in rural Worcestershire. The school consists of a Nursery and Reception class for pupils aged 3 to 4, a Pre-Prep for pupils aged 5 to 6 and a Prep for pupils aged 7 to 13. The school has a working farm and an equestrian centre. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors.
19. There are 15 children in the early years comprising one Reception class and one Nursery class.
20. The school has identified 28 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Six pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
21. English is an additional language for 14 pupils.
22. The school states its aims are to provide an inspirational environment where pupils will become the best versions of themselves.

Purpose of the progress monitoring inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the DfE. The purpose of this inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the Independent School Standards, National Minimum Standards for boarding schools, Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and any other requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

21 March 2025

23. One reporting inspector visited the school for one day.
24. Inspection activities included:
 - scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
 - discussion with the chair of governors
 - discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
 - discussions with pupils and staff.

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- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant Standards are met.
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Independent Schools Inspectorate

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