

Claremont School

Baldslow, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7PW

Inspection dates

3 March 2020

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5, 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii)

- Leaders acted promptly to make necessary improvements following the June 2019 safeguarding audit conducted by the safeguarding governor. One suggestion was that the personal development programme needed to be enhanced for some year groups.
- Leaders responsible for the personal development of younger and older pupils work well together. The personal development programme across the school now places greater focus on teaching pupils about the choices they make, safer relationships, social media and safeguarding issues.
- Leaders are not complacent. They know that some aspects of the programme need revisiting and reinforcing so that pupils are even clearer about some of the more complex issues that they find difficult to navigate. Leaders have strong plans in place to further strengthen some topics.
- Leaders ensure that the programme is flexible. They have introduced some topics in response to issues that have arisen in the school. For instance, they have introduced a programme of lessons on sexting and issues of consent for older pupils.
- The programme also emphasises the importance of kindness and standing up for what is right. These positive messages are reinforced in assemblies and through extra-curricular activities, such as charity fundraising.
- To boost the impact of topics which deal with how older pupils should stay safe, leaders have used external experts and theatre groups. They have also invited parents in to school to attend talks on online safety given by experts.
- Pupils told inspectors that the personal development programme had improved over the last year. They have found some of the sessions more relevant than others, especially those that relate to social media. They enjoy the opportunity to debate issues, but not all teachers provide this.
- The programme does include opportunities for pupils to learn about the values that underpin our society and the laws in which they are enshrined.

- Pupils take on a variety of leadership roles within the school, including helping to run events in the 'houses' to which they belong. The school has appointed additional prefects who are responsible for pupils' well-being and developing the pupil voice.
- The school encourages pupils to make a positive contribution to society and is outward looking. Pupils actively support national and local charities. For instance, each half term a pupil nominates a charity for which the school raises money.
- This aspect of the independent school standards has been met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The school places a strong emphasis on safeguarding. The proprietorial body has appointed a new director of safeguarding, who rigorously holds leaders to account. She has worked closely with the school and is also the school's safeguarding governor.
- The safeguarding governor has considerable expertise and very high standards which she brings to bear when advising leaders. She recently undertook a thorough safeguarding audit. The report from the audit outlines many strengths in safeguarding at the school and also makes a small number of recommendations, which leaders have fully embraced.
- In September 2019, the leadership team was restructured and new designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs) were appointed for the preparatory and senior school sites. The DSLs are very committed to their role and have undertaken all necessary training.
- Designated safeguarding leaders diligently monitor the concerns that staff record and decide on what follow-up actions are needed. Where necessary, they refer concerns to local authority welfare services. The DSLs are very well versed in the referral procedures for the different local authorities with which they work. They keep a close watch over the progress of the referrals they make to welfare services, challenging decisions when they think it is appropriate to do so.
- Designated safeguarding leaders work closely with all staff, especially those on the preparatory site, to ensure that they can confidently use the new online system for recording safeguarding concerns. As a result, staff on the preparatory site are now logging more concerns on the online system than they did previously.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and happy at school and know who to speak to if they have any worries or concerns.
- Senior leaders, including DSLs, are very aware that a significant minority of older pupils hail from countries that have different attitudes to safeguarding than those held by the school's leaders. They are working very closely with these pupils so that they fully understand fundamental British values and how to stay safe in Britain.
- Designated safeguarding leaders work closely with the safeguarding governor to ensure policies are underpinned by carefully considered procedures. The safeguarding governor has also supported them in developing bespoke training for staff, which includes peer-on-peer abuse.

- The DSLs collaborate well and regularly meet to share their knowledge and expertise. They have jointly developed plans to improve the ways in which school supports pupils with mental health issues.
- Governors' minutes and monthly reports from the principal to the governing body show that safeguarding issues are discussed at governor meetings and given a high priority.
- Leaders have recently revised the safeguarding policy and other policies. The policy, which is now on the website, references the latest version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.
- All independent school standards relating to this aspect are met by the school.

Paragraph 8, 8(a), 8(b)

- The newly appointed director of boarding is a member of the school's senior management team. She has worked closely with DSLs to improve the safeguarding arrangements for pupils who board.
- Pupils who board, who spoke to inspectors, could identify a trusted adult in whom they feel they can confide. Safeguarding arrangements are clear. Staff and pupils who board are well informed about roles and responsibilities.
- Leaders have put measures in place to support pupils who board in staying safe when online. For example, access to the internet at the boarding provision is restricted. The director of boarding has plans to develop the guidance on e-safety that staff at the boarding houses provide, so that it is more educative.
- Pupils who board feel that they are starting to have more of a say in the way the boarding houses are run. They reported that they feel safe and well cared for.
- All independent school standards relating to this aspect are met by the school.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c)

- Over the last year, there have been a number of changes in the way behaviour is managed, which are outlined in the new behaviour policy.
- New approaches reward good behaviour in age-appropriate ways. Similarly, leaders have put in place a number of carefully thought-out sanctions for when behaviour falls below their expectations. For example, to improve behaviour on buses, older pupils now sign behaviour contracts.
- Sanctions are designed so that they are progressive. Leaders use the full range of sanctions at their disposal. On very rare occasions, when there has been a serious breach of behaviour, and as a last resort, leaders have excluded pupils. They have followed due processes closely.
- Pupils feel the school's approach to rewards and sanctions is fair. They describe Claremont as a happy school.
- Leaders closely track pupils' behaviour using an online system. They carefully analyse information from the school's online behaviour tracking system to ascertain which pupils need further guidance to manage their behaviour and which staff need more support.

- Leaders are working closely with staff to ensure that they apply the behaviour policy consistently. They have provided staff with training on different approaches for managing pupils' behaviour.
- The school meets all the independent school standards in this aspect.

Paragraph 10

- Leaders have updated the bullying policy and developed the approaches they use to tackle bullying. They have developed resources and materials to help pupils to understand more fully what constitutes bullying.
- They are dedicated to ensuring that all pupils adhere to the school's values of kindness and respect by all. They have led assemblies to promote this message and also used personal development sessions to reinforce it. A number of prefect roles have been created that focus on well-being and pastoral support.
- Leaders carefully analyse online information about bullying incidents. They use this information to identify hotspots and to focus their work more precisely.
- Leaders are fully aware that there have been some incidents of bullying and are tackling them head on. For example, leaders identified that some of the incidents of bullying had occurred on school buses. In response, leaders have worked closely with bus drivers and with pupils to improve the behaviour on buses.
- There was a general consensus from pupils and bus drivers spoken to by inspectors that behaviour was getting better, including the way pupils treat each other.
- The deputy headteacher responsible for behaviour collaborates well with designated safeguarding leaders on bullying issues. For example, together they are working with a number of older students so that they understand that some 'football banter' can be offensive and contravenes the Equality Act 2010. In line with the school's bullying and equalities policies, some pupils have been sanctioned because they have used offensive language in this context.
- The school meets the independent school standard relating to this aspect.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The risk assessment policy is effective.
- Leaders review risk assessments appropriately. They follow a format that has been implemented across all the schools owned by the proprietor.
- The recent safeguarding audit conducted by the safeguarding governor praised the quality of risk assessments.
- Detailed actions are included on risk assessments to mitigate known risks.
- All independent school standards relating to this aspect are met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32, 32(1)(c), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(f)

- Over recent weeks, leaders have overhauled existing policies on the school's website. They have updated many policies and clarified which policies are whole school and which refer to a particular site.

- The updated safeguarding policy, which refers to the September 2019 version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', is easy to find on the school's website. It provides additional, helpful details about those issues which leaders feel are most relevant to pupils and parents, such as how to stay safe when using social media.
- All updated policies, including the admissions policy, behaviour and exclusions policy, first aid policy and the health and safety policy, are easily accessible on the school's website. They are located in an area of the website designated for policies and clearly signposted on the website's 'home' page.
- The updated complaints procedure is available on the school's website.
- The school lists the number of formal complaints it has received on its website.
- The website makes it clear that printed copies of all policies are available from the school.
- In relation to this aspect, all independent school standards are met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)

- The school takes complaints seriously and they are investigated in line with the school's own policy.
- The complaints policy has recently been revised so that it is crystal clear that the independent member of the complaints panel must not be connected with the school or the proprietor in any way.
- The policy outlines in detail the procedures for investigating all types of complaints, including formal and informal stages.
- Leaders diligently log more serious informal complaints and formal complaints. These logs record correspondence to and from complainants and any follow-up actions leaders have taken. Leaders are not complacent. They are currently developing a new approach to logging complaints, which aims to make the process more streamlined.
- Leaders can demonstrate how they have learned from complaints and made alterations to some procedures following complaints.
- Complaint policies and procedures meet all the requirements of Part 7 of the independent school standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c), 34(2)

- There have been many changes to the school's senior leadership team over the past two years. Changes since September 2019 have strengthened leadership capacity in safeguarding and behaviour.
- Leaders have developed many new approaches over the last year. They carefully monitor and evaluate the impact of these changes. Leaders are adept at using the information they gather from tracking and from the checks they make to inform their next steps. They do not jump to simplistic conclusions but weigh up evidence

carefully. Where necessary, they make further changes. They are currently in the process of sharpening up some procedures and practices.

- Senior leaders, governors, headteachers and the principal have worked well together to update and streamline existing policies, as well as to develop new ones. They collaboratively audit the provision to check that it is in line with the independent school standards.
- Under the auspices of the new headteacher of the preparatory school, there have been very positive changes to the leadership of the early years provision.
- The culture in the senior leadership team is very open, honest and collaborative. For example, leaders recognise that there is more work to be done on their mobile phone policy so that it is clearer and easier to implement. They are in contact with other schools to find out how they are managing mobile phones in school.
- Leaders are highly accountable to the proprietorial body and governors, who keep a close watch over the school. Records from meetings show that the governing body focuses sharply on pupils' welfare.
- Governing body minutes and discussions with the chair of the governing body indicate that governors use their knowledge of the school and expertise to suggest follow-up actions. Governors check to see if leaders have implemented suggested follow-up actions.
- The standards in this part are met.

School details

Unique reference number	114640
Social care unique reference number	1159395
DfE registration number	845/6010
Inspection number	10144479

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	1 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	710
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	126
Number of part-time pupils	None
Number of boarders on roll	91
Proprietor	International Schools Partnership
Chair	Mr Nicholas Rugg
Principal	Principal: Mr Giles Perrin Headteacher of senior school and sixth form: Mr Ed Dickie Headteacher of preparatory and nursery school: Mr Giles Bunker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,100 – £17,400
Annual fees (boarders)	£27,300 – £32,750
Telephone number	01424 751 555
Website	http://www.claremontschool.co.uk/
Email address	enquiries@claremontschool.co.uk

Date of previous standard inspection

12–14 March 2019

Information about this school

- The information about the school's proprietor on the government's website, 'Get Information about Schools', is not correct. The International Schools Partnership is the proprietor not the one listed on the government's website. The International Schools Partnership became the school's proprietor in 2018.
- In September 2019, a new headteacher responsible for preparatory and nursery provision joined the school. There have also been a number of changes to the team who lead the early years provision, including the appointment of a deputy headteacher with responsibility for this aspect of the school
- New designated safeguarding leaders were appointed for both secondary and preparatory sites in September 2019. A new director of boarding was appointed in September 2019.
- Claremont School is a non-selective, independent, co-educational school for pupils aged from just under one to 19 years. There is a 'football academy' within the school.
- The school was founded in 1925, initially as a nursery and preparatory school. In September 2011, the senior school opened on a site near Bodiam.
- The school was previously inspected by Ofsted in March 2019, when it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school provides residential care for pupils from 11 to 19 years old in two boarding houses within a short drive from the main school sites. The vast majority of pupils who reside in the boarding houses are from overseas.
- The school's boarding provision was inspected by Ofsted in 2017, when it was judged to be outstanding.
- A small proportion of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language.
- A very small number of pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The education inspection was aligned to a social care inspection, which took place at the same time. The social care inspector joined the education inspector for a number of meetings with leaders and pupils, as well conference phone calls with governors. A separate report will be published for the social care inspection.
- The inspection was carried out with no notice and commissioned by the Department for Education in response to concerns which relate to pupils' behaviour, bullying and safeguarding.
- The inspector met the headteacher of the nursery and preparatory school, the headteacher of the senior school and sixth form, and the principal on several occasions.
- Meetings were also held with the designated safeguarding leaders from both the preparatory and senior school sites, the deputy headteacher responsible for behaviour in the secondary school, three groups of pupils (two groups from the secondary site and one from the preparatory site), and a group of staff.
- The inspector also met the team of leaders who oversees the early years provision, including the deputy headteacher responsible for this aspect of the school's work.
- Conference telephone calls were held with the chair of the governing body, who represents the proprietor, and separately with the safeguarding governor. The inspector also met with parents informally at the start and end of the day, school bus drivers and with preparatory school pupils during lunchtime. The education inspector accompanied the social care inspector to visit pupils in the senior boarding house.
- A number of documents relating to complaints, behaviour and safeguarding were scrutinised. These documents included the centrally kept record on the checks that the school carries out when staff are appointed, documents relating to policies and procedures, as well as records of concerns and referrals to the local authority.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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