



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Advice Note for a Progress Monitoring Visit**

**Ellesmere College**

**February 2022**

## School's details

<b>College</b>	Ellesmere College			
<b>DfE number</b>	893/6001			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1103049			
<b>Address</b>	Ellesmere College Ellesmere Shropshire SY12 9AB			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01691 622321			
<b>Email address</b>	office@ellesmere.co.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Brendan Wignall			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Woodard Corporation			
<b>Age range</b>	7 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	560			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	339	<b>Boarders</b>	221
	<b>Junior School</b>	61	<b>Senior School</b>	315
	<b>Sixth Form</b>	184		
<b>Date of visit</b>	16 February 2022			

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Ellesmere College is an independent co-educational day and boarding school situated in a rural setting in Shropshire. The school is a Church of England foundation and part of the Woodard Corporation group of Anglican schools, who appoint a board of trustees to act as governors of the school. Boarding provision is available from Year 8 and there are seven boarding houses, all situated on the main school site. The school has 159 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 6 have an education, health and care plan. There are 79 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The previous inspection was a brought forward regulatory compliance inspection which took place on 19 to 21 May and included an additional visit on 30 June 2021 to gather additional information about safeguarding.

### Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the regulatory compliance inspection visits of 19 to 21 May and 30 June 2021. The visit focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour); NMS 12	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid); NMS 3	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6	<b>Met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (quality of leadership and management); NMS 13	<b>Met</b>

## 2. Inspection findings

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11]

#### Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements
- 2.2 At the time of the previous inspection the safeguarding arrangements at the school did not meet standards because it failed to ensure that it provided a safe environment for pupils taking part in the swimming club which was run in partnership with Swim England.
- 2.3 At the time of the current inspection, the swimming club was in the process of closing. The school was incorporating the activities of the swimming club into its own swimming academy managed solely by the school.
- 2.4 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

- 2.5 The school meets the standards.
- 2.6 The safeguarding arrangements have been reviewed and developed. Leaders recognised that they needed to take action to ensure that pupils taking part in swimming club activities are kept safe.
- 2.7 Leaders have taken action to better safeguard pupils who take part in the swimming activities of the club. Pupils whom the school enables to participate in the swimming club's activities do so within a safe environment. Leaders have appointed as designated safeguarding lead (DSL) a senior leader who has not previously had a leadership role in the swimming club. Leaders have increased the number of deputy DSLs to provide better coverage of safeguarding arrangements. The school has carried out appropriate pre-employment checks on swimming coaches and poolside supervisors. School leaders have provided swimming coaches and poolside supervisors with suitable safeguarding training. School leaders now ensure that the swimming club sessions cannot take place unless there is a suitably trained poolside supervisor to ensure that swimming club staff are carefully monitored. The DSL meets regularly with the welfare officer of the swimming club to discuss safeguarding procedures and communication arrangements. The DSL and welfare officer have discussed the school's assessment of risks relating to pupils' participation in the swimming club, safeguarding training and the welfare responsibilities of club coaches and officials. Minutes also confirm discussion of the liaison between the swimming club and the school to support the well-being of swimmers, both when under the supervision of the swimming club and under the supervision of the school.
- 2.8 Governors conduct a suitable annual review of safeguarding and have conducted an adequate review of the safeguarding of pupils while they are taking part in the swimming club's activities. Scrutiny of safeguarding records since the previous inspection confirms that safeguarding concerns identified during pupils' participation in the swimming club are now communicated swiftly to the school, including by swimming club staff. In addition, where the school has identified safeguarding concerns about individual pupils, such as issues relating to self-harm, it has communicated these appropriately to the swimming club. This enables personnel at the club to be mindful of such issues when working with any pupils concerned. Records also show that any pupils experiencing these issues receive appropriate support from the school. Safeguarding records demonstrate that the school has acted in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures, including referring concerns to safeguarding partners when appropriate. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they felt confident that they could raise any concerns while taking part in the swimming club's activities and that they would be listened to.

- 2.9 The DSL and deputy DSLs provide sufficient coverage for this role across the school. They and all staff are suitably trained. Those who spoke to the inspectors displayed understanding of the staff code of conduct and their safeguarding responsibilities. They also demonstrated understanding of the school's suitable safeguarding procedures, including those relating to child-on-child abuse, pupils' participation in swimming activities, and allegations against staff or other adults working with pupils. The school implements an effective safer recruitment policy. The school filters and monitors use of the internet appropriately. It teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online and when engaged in swimming club activities.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 12]**

- 2.10 The school meets the standards.
- 2.11 The school implements an appropriate behaviour policy. It keeps suitable records of sanctions awarded for poor behaviour. These records indicate that the school implements appropriate sanctions in relation to the use or possession of alcohol or cigarettes. Pupils who spoke with the inspectors said that most pupils did not 'get involved' with behaviours such as smoking and that they had not experienced any pressure to become involved in such behaviours. They described such behaviour as uncommon and showed effective understanding about misuse of alcohol or nicotine as they explained the guidance they receive from the school about such matters.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – first aid [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13; NMS 3]**

- 2.12 The school meets the standards.
- 2.13 Records show that the school provides pupils with appropriate first aid and ensures that all pupils receive suitable medical treatment when required, including boarders. Records also show that the school communicates effectively with external agencies when appropriate, including where there are concerns relating to self-harm. Suitable communication on such matters is also evident between the swimming club and the school.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 6]**

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 The school implements a suitable risk assessment policy. Since the previous inspection, the school has ensured effective assessment of the potential risks relating to pupils' participation in the swimming club and taken appropriate action to reduce any risks identified. For example, it has implemented suitable risk assessments relating to pupils' participation in the swimming club's activities; to school staff who previously had a role in the management of the swimming club; and to individual swimming coaches. The school has taken appropriate steps to reduce any potential risks to pupils' welfare identified in such assessments. It ensures that any conditions required by Swim England for coaches to participate in Swim England activities are being met. The school has put conditions on swimming coaches' access to and communication with pupils. For example, any electronic communication between the coaches and pupils or parents is checked by the DSL before it is sent. The school has employed poolside supervisors to ensure that swimming coaches are never left unsupervised when working with pupils. The school ensures that it does not make use of any swimming coaches during any period of suspension from Swim England.

**Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]**

- 2.16 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

**Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 13]**

- 2.17 The school meets the standards.
- 2.18 Measures taken by the school since the previous inspection indicate that the proprietor and school leaders 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, particularly those whom the school enables to participate in the swimming club. These measures include replacing, in key roles, any staff who previously were working with the swimming club. Governors' review of safeguarding since the previous inspection includes effective consideration of safeguarding procedures implemented at the swimming club and the safeguards put in place to monitor the behaviour of adults involved in the club. Governors have required the DSL to report to the compliance committee and the full governing body with examples of how the school and swimming club act together to support pupils' well-being. Minutes of governors' meetings since the previous inspection demonstrate that governors have required assurances relating to suitability of staff working at the swimming club; appropriate risk assessments in relation to pupils' involvement in the club; and meaningful and regular communication between the school and the club.

### **3. Regulatory action points**

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this visit, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

## **4. Summary of evidence**

- 4.1 The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff and held a discussion with the chair of governors. They talked with groups of pupils and scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.