



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Report for an Additional Inspection**

**Westminster School**

**November 2021**

## School's details

<b>School</b>	Westminster School			
<b>DfE number</b>	213/6047			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	312728			
<b>Address</b>	Westminster School Little Dean's Yard London SW1P 3PF			
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7963 1042			
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@westminster.org.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Dr Gary Savage			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Mark Batten			
<b>Age range</b>	13 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	766			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	582	<b>Boarders</b>	184
	<b>Seniors</b>	363	<b>Sixth Form</b>	403
<b>Date of visit</b>	11 to 12 November 2021			

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Westminster is a day and boarding school, for male pupils from the age of 13 and co-educational in the sixth form. Around a quarter of the pupils board in one of six all-age boarding houses. The school is a registered charity, overseen by a governing body. It is situated within the precincts of Westminster Abbey, with some buildings and playing fields located a short distance away. The school has identified 99 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom one has an education, health and care plan. There is one pupil who speaks English as an additional language. Since the school's previous inspection, a regulatory compliance inspection in November 2019, a new headmaster has been appointed.

### Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an unannounced additional inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015. The inspection was asked to focus specifically on the school's provision for, and implementation and teaching of, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE).

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraph 2 (curriculum), paragraph 2(A) (relationships and sex education) and paragraph 3 (teaching)	<b>Not met</b>
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	<b>Met</b>
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 10 (bullying); NMS 12	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 15	<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 (leadership and management); NMS 13	<b>Not met</b>

## 2. Inspection findings

### Quality of education provided – curriculum, relationships and sex education and teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2, 2A and 3]

- 2.1 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.2 The school has recently undertaken a complete revision of its PSHE and RSE programmes, partly in response to statutory requirements and partly in response to recent disclosures relating to harmful sexual behaviours amongst pupils. This has resulted in a comprehensive scheme of work. The scheme has due regard for the promotion of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It has been drawn up in consultation with pupils, parents and staff, whose views were appropriately taken into consideration. The school's policy for RSE is available to parents on the school website. The programme reflects the school's aims and ethos, encourages respect for other people, including between genders, and pays due regard to the protected characteristics which are set out in the Equality Act 2010. It recognises the gendered nature of harmful sexual behaviours and aims to support pupils so that they feel safe about options for disclosure. Appropriate topics such as consent, relationships and sexual harassment are included and there is provision for these to be re-visited in an age-appropriate level.
- 2.3 In Years 9 and 12, the RSE programme is taught by specialist trained teachers in dedicated PSHE lessons. Co-ordinators for PSHE have produced effective guidance for those staff who teach the subject and have provided suitable resources for all of the topics covered. Key elements of the programme are reinforced through form tutor periods, assemblies. Supplementary workshops are provided by visiting consultants. In Years 10, 11 and 13, however, the programme is taught by form tutors during tutor time. In practice, this means that pupils' experience of RSE lessons across year groups is not consistent in terms both of time allocation and the effectiveness of the teaching they experience.
- 2.4 In their responses to inspection questionnaires and in interviews, a number of pupils felt that the RSE programme and the way in which it is taught do not meet their needs. They spoke of insufficient time being given to the programme; a lack of depth in the way some topics are covered; material is not always presented in a way that best suits their age or ability; and a lack of relevance to their daily lives in the programme's content. Inspectors concluded the scheme is effectively designed to enable pupils to acquire personal and social skills and to develop positive attitudes and values. However, the way in which the subject is timetabled and taught, the lack of monitoring of teaching and some teaching materials provided mean pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs are not appropriately taken into account.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.5 The school meets the standard.
- 2.6 Through its programme of assemblies, visiting speakers and, to some extent, the PSHE curriculum, the school successfully promotes mutual respect and tolerance of others, including those with different beliefs and/or cultures, those with protected characteristics, and between genders. This was evident from pupils' responses in discussion. They understand and appreciate the rationale for the school's newly stated values and consider the school to be a tolerant community where respect for one another develops appropriately with age and maturity. The school enables pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, and it effectively develops their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

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

- 2.7 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.8 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**

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 The safeguarding policy is implemented effectively throughout the school. It is supported by suitable safer recruitment and whistleblowing policies, and an appropriate staff code of conduct. Suitable procedures are in place to listen to pupils, who confirm that they feel safe and have sufficient opportunities and channels to express concerns. When they do so, they are confident that they will be supported appropriately, and suitable action will be taken. The school liaises extensively, promptly and effectively with the local safeguarding children partnership (LSCP), in line with local procedures, to safeguard children in need or at risk. Discussion with staff confirmed that they understand their responsibilities to safeguard children, including those with SEND. They readily share and record concerns and know that they can make a direct referral to children's services if necessary. They understand current definitions of abuse and recognise the vulnerability of pupils with SEND.
- 2.11 Records show that, on joining the school, new members of staff receive appropriate induction in safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs have the required levels of up-to-date advanced training for their roles, including training in mental health and pupils' well-being. The DSL ensures that all staff receive regular formal training in line with LSCP requirements and informal updates on safeguarding practice and issues. Records of this training are systematically kept and show that the training for all staff is current and appropriate. In interviews and in their response to inspection questionnaires, all staff agreed that their safeguarding training equips them to deal effectively with pupil concerns. This is confirmed by inspection evidence. Staff appreciate the high profile that safeguarding is afforded by the school.
- 2.12 Suitable procedures are in place to deal with allegations against adults working with children, and correct referral of such allegations is made to the appropriate bodies. In interview, pupils demonstrated a clear awareness of the dangers of social media and the use of the internet. Appropriate filtering systems are applied for the use of technology, and suitable arrangements were made to promote the safeguarding of pupils online during the COVID-19 period of remote learning. Governors provide effective support for designated safeguarding staff, and the school's safeguarding policy and practice are reviewed annually by the governing body.
- 2.13 Staff and governors have been trained to understand, identify and respond appropriately to incidences of sexual harassment, sexual violence, including online sexual abuse and peer-on-peer sexual abuse and fulfil their responsibilities in these areas. Senior leaders work effectively in this regard with the LSCP and are aware of the range of support available to children and young people who are victims or who perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour. The school has taken prompt and decisive action to refine its policies and practice, in effective liaison with the LSCP, in the light of current issues surrounding racism, harmful sexual behaviour and protected characteristics. It takes appropriate and unbiased action to deal with any instances of such behaviours.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 The school has an appropriate written behaviour policy which sets out the standards it expects of pupils. It incorporates a suitable system of rewards, and the sanctions to be adopted in the event of misbehaviour. The school's expectations are based on values of humility, hard work, inclusivity, and tolerance. The policy places emphasis on taking action against inequalities and discrimination of any kind and relies on a culture of mutual respect between pupils, staff and parents.
- 2.16 All of the groups interviewed during the inspection spoke of mostly polite and courteous behaviour, and pupils' respect for one another and for their teachers. Discussion with pupils and staff and scrutiny of supporting documentation indicate that the school has a behavioural approach, including sanctions, to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated. The school keeps separate records and analyses incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to counter abuse.

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10; NMS 12]**

- 2.17 The school meets the standards.
- 2.18 The school has an appropriate policy for bullying which sets out clearly the measures taken to prevent it, and those taken to deal with bullying when it occurs. This is implemented effectively. Staff receive appropriate training and pupils receive effective guidance about bullying. They understand their responsibility for reporting any instances of bullying, and records show that this happens in practice. Resolution of bullying incidents involves discussion with both perpetrator and victim, and parents of all parties are kept informed. Staff understand that such incidents may become safeguarding issues and may require the involvement of the police or children's services. Those with designated responsibilities understand the thresholds for such referrals.

**Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 15]**

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 Staff are suitably deployed to ensure that pupils are properly supervised at break, lunchtime, in moving around the school and in boarding houses.

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

- 2.21 The school meets the standards.
- 2.22 The school safeguards and promotes the welfare of pupils by drawing up and implementing effectively a written risk assessment policy. This includes effective assessments of risk where a pupil has a particular educational or behavioural need, or there is a mental health concern. It takes appropriate action to mitigate any risks identified.

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

- 2.23 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]**

2.24 The school does not meet the standards.

2.25 The school has made significant progress in adapting policy and practice in order to address known issues surrounding racism, harmful sexual behaviour and protected characteristics. However, despite the evident impetus for change and some improvement, not enough has been done to ensure the effectiveness of the PSHE and RSE programme. In this area, those with leadership and management responsibility have not fulfilled their responsibilities effectively so that the well-being of pupils is actively promoted at all times.

### 3. Regulatory action points

3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

#### **ISSR Part 1, Quality of education – curriculum and relationships and sex education, paragraphs 2 and 2A**

- The school must ensure that it provides RSE in a way that is fully informed by statutory guidance; timely; suited to pupils' needs in terms of materials; and takes account of pupils' views [paragraph 2A(1)(d)]

#### **ISSR Part 1, Quality of education – teaching, paragraph 3**

- The school must ensure that all staff involved in the teaching of PSHE and RSE receive sufficient training to enable all pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress through effective planning; acquire good subject knowledge; ensure provision for different needs; utilise suitable materials; and that teaching is monitored sufficiently to ensure that all pupils' needs are met [paragraph 3(a), (c), (d) and (e)]

#### **ISSR Part 8, Leadership and management, paragraph 34; NMS 13**

- The school must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure the standards are met consistently, in particular through active promotion of the well-being of pupils by implementing and monitoring the RSE curriculum with full effectiveness [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.3 to 13.5].



## **4. Summary of evidence**

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors and the designated safeguarding governor. They visited different areas of the school, observed lessons and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.