



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

**REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION
FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

14 TO 15 JUNE 2016



School's Details

Full Name of School	Summerhill School
DfE Number	935/6016
Registered Charity Number	1089804
Address	Summerhill School Westward Ho Leiston Suffolk IP16 4HY
Telephone Number	01728830540
Email Address	office@summerhillschool.co.uk
Principal	Mrs Zoe Readhead
Proprietor	Mr and Mrs A Readhead Partnership
Age Range	5 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	67
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (39 boys; 28 girls)
Number of day pupils	Total: 5
Number of boarders	Total: 62
Pupils' Ability	The school does not use standardised tests. However, its own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
Pupils' Needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is five . None has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. They receive support for literacy. Forty pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and all receive support for their English.
History of the School	The school was founded in 1921 by the educationalist A S Neill, and has occupied its current site since 1927. The school was founded on democratic, self-governing principles that promote the freedom of the individual, which continue to this day.
Ownership and Governing Structure	The school is owned and managed by A S Neill's daughter, who acts as principal and, with her husband, forms a proprietorial partnership

School's Details

School Structure	The school educates 67 pupils, 28 girls and 39 boys. All but 5 pupils are boarders. Classes are small, and many combine pupils of different ages.
Inspection Dates	14 to 15 June 2016
Other Useful Information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i) All boarders except one are full-time boarding pupils.ii) Boarders are accommodated in five accommodation units, grouped according to age.

About the Inspection

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. . 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.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (“boarding NMS”). It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

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, including the boarding NMS, 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, including the boarding NMS. 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](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

The school meets almost all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015. In order to meet all the standards, the school should take immediate action to remedy the deficiency as detailed below.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

Up to Year 9, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment.

At GCSE in the years 2012 to 2014, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools. At IGCSE over the same period, results have been in line with worldwide norms.

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 pupil 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. Boarders' views are actively encouraged and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system (or equivalent) operating in the school is suitably managed.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; 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. Boarders do not experience discrimination, and their care is sensitive to different needs.

An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed. Throughout the school, staff and pupils have access to common bathroom facilities, but this arrangement works effectively and does not have a material impact on pupils' welfare.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 7 - 16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 and NMS 2-4, 6-12, 15 and 16 are met.

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17-21] and NMS 14 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. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare. Sleeping accommodation for boys and girls is provided in some houses on the same corridor. Boys and girls have the use of common bathroom facilities. These arrangements are an integral part of the school's philosophy of education: they have been in place since the school's foundation and have been approved at previous inspections. They do not have a material impact on boarders' welfare, and have not been raised as a concern by boarders or parents. Effective and well-understood procedures enable pupils to achieve resolution, should they have concerns about boarding provision and accommodation arrangements. Nevertheless, these arrangements have been deemed not to meet current regulatory requirements for the appropriate separation of sleeping accommodation between genders.

The standards relating to the premises and accommodation in paragraphs 22-29 and 31 and NMS 5.2-5.8 are met but those in paragraph 30 [boarding accommodation] and NMS 5.1 [boarders' sleeping accommodation] are not met .

Action point

- **the school must ensure that boarders' sleeping accommodation provides appropriate separation by gender [NMS 5.1 and, for the same reason, Part 5 paragraph 30].**

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, and inspection reports. The school has agreed with parents not to provide an annual report of their own child's progress.

The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are 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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [Paragraph 34] and NMS 13 is met.

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 proprietor. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended the school meeting. Inspectors visited the boarding accommodation and 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

Mr Timothy Holgate

Reporting Inspector

Mr Martin Bussey

Additional inspector

Ms Deborah Mills

Team Inspector for Boarding (Headmistress, ISA school)

Mrs Elizabeth Worthington

Team Inspector for Boarding (Senior Deputy Head, HMC school)

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