

## Clifton College

32 College Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 3JH

**Date of visit** 29 February 2016

### Purpose of visit

This was an unannounced visit carried out at the request of the DfE to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the emergency visit on 1 July 2015. The focus of the visit was on welfare, health and safety; the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietor; the manner in which complaints are handled and the quality of leadership and management.

### Characteristics of the School

Clifton College was established in 1862 in Bristol as a day and boarding school. It began as a boys' school and became co-educational in 1987. It provides an education for pupils aged from two to eighteen years. There are four day houses (three for boys and one for girls); one joint day and boarding house (for girls); and six boarding houses (four for boys and two for girls). The school currently has 1178 pupils on roll, including 390 boarders. There are 714 boys and 464 girls. The Early Years Foundation Stage has 78 children. The school has identified 146 pupils as having SEND; there are none with a statement of educational needs and/or disabilities or education, health and care plan. Currently, there are 139 pupils who require support for English as an additional language (EAL). The school is a charity, administered by a board of governors known as the Council.

### Inspection findings

#### **Welfare, Health and Safety – Safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b), and NMS 11]**

The school meets the regulations and the standard.

Since the previous emergency visit, the school has made excellent progress in establishing first-class procedures and practices and raising the awareness of all staff and pupils to the importance of safeguarding. A culture of safeguarding is now embedded in the ethos of the school and all are thoroughly aware of the school's procedures and what they should do if they have any concerns.

#### Safeguarding policy

The safeguarding policy has been amended in line with the recommendations of the previous visit, and subsequent changes in requirements. The latest version on the school website, January 2016, has been approved and adopted by the college council.

### Safeguarding training logs

The school has a comprehensive electronic safeguarding log which records accurately all training undertaken since the previous visit and also, where any prior record exists, of training undertaken prior to this date. Every person who has a role in the school in a regulated activity has received appropriate safeguarding training and those in an unregulated activity have either received training or will have done so by the end of this academic year. This includes training in online safety. The school monitors closely the use of the internet, showing no tolerance of any breaches of the code of conduct by staff or pupils. The training log is monitored by the chair of Clifton College Safeguarding and Welfare Committee (CCSWC) through random sampling, and the results are recorded in the minutes of meetings.

### Staff understanding of safeguarding

Staff, whatever their role or time spent in the school, showed in discussion that they have a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures, are thoroughly aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and take these responsibilities seriously. Their responses, and those of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and other senior staff, show that safeguarding and pupils' well-being now have a very high profile within the school. Scrutiny of minutes of council meetings and of a wide range of other meetings showed that these issues are usually standing items on the agenda and are at the forefront of many discussions in the school. The CCSWC has reviewed the outcomes of recent safeguarding training through discussion with the DSL, who has instigated changes to the training in the light of these findings.

### Access to staff accommodation

The comprehensive staff code of conduct, updated at the end of 2015 in the light of communications with the local authority designated officer (LADO) and now written in clearer terms, was issued to staff in December. All staff were required to sign that they had read and understood it, and discussions with staff during the visit showed this to be the case. Staff say that they value the very clear guidance given by the new code of conduct. Effective implementation of the code of conduct is closely monitored by senior staff, including house masters/mistresses, on a day-to-day basis and by the council, through the rigorous monitoring work of both the CCSWC and the governor with special responsibility for boarding.

Arrangements for pupils' access to staff accommodation are clearly laid out in an appendix to the staff code of conduct, which is included in the house handbooks. Although the details vary from house to house, due to the physical nature of the buildings, the arrangements are consistent overall. Pupils are made aware of, and regularly reminded about, the arrangements in house meetings and through notices within each house. In interviews, pupils indicated that they were very clear about access to different areas of their own and other houses.

### Educational visits

The educational visits policy and procedure, together with the new staff code of conduct, give very clear guidance on the new arrangements for all occasions when pupils are taken out of college by staff or visit staff homes or private accommodation. These arrangements are known and understood by all staff. Planning of visits is undertaken by a team of staff, rather than an individual member of staff and all visits are agreed and signed off by the headmaster. Meetings are minuted, rigorous risk assessments carried out where necessary

and advice sought from the DSL on safeguarding and welfare issues. Arrangements for trips and visits are monitored by the compliance committee, on which the DSL sits, through sampling. The results of this monitoring feed into the CCSWC and will form part of the annual safeguarding review. The health and safety committee will also undertake an annual audit of all visits.

### Annual review of safeguarding

From discussions within the school, including with the chairman of CCSWC and other members of Council, it is evident that there has been a thorough review of safeguarding since the previous visit. The review has been extremely wide-ranging and involved both people in school and independent experts. It is well documented, with reports to council at each of their meetings. The DSL is currently preparing the formal annual review which is due to in June 2016. The school has also commissioned an independent review of safeguarding, which is to be received shortly.

### Working with other agencies

The CCSWC, constituted in line with the recommendations of council and the LADO, has been instrumental in bringing about, in a short time, a major change in attitude within the College to all aspects of safeguarding and pupils' well-being. It has overseen the appointment of a new DSL, an extensive programme of staff training, the updating of all policies and procedures and the introduction of new monitoring systems. The committee meets regularly and reports directly to Council. There is a new openness and willingness amongst staff to discuss issues, however minor they might seem, both within the College and with outside agencies. The DSL works closely with the LADO, speaking to her on a weekly basis. Everyone has embraced this change in culture and understands the need for training and also for rigorous record keeping and monitoring. The recent introduction of the child protection online monitoring system (CPOMS) is already proving a very effective tool for monitoring and tracking every aspect of pupils' welfare and behaviour. Examples were seen of its use to identify very promptly issues which were then appropriately referred to the LADO and other outside agencies.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietor [ISSR Part 4 paragraph 18(2)(b) and (c) and 21(3)(a)(iv) and (b) and NMS14]**

The school meets the regulations and standard.

The recruitment and selection policy, suitably amended, has been implemented effectively for all recent appointments, with at least one member of any interview panel having undergone safer recruitment training. The required checks have now been carried out on all staff working at the school, including sports coaches, and the results entered accurately on the single central register. For staff appointed since the previous visit, all checks have been carried out in a timely manner. A barred list check and risk assessment have been done and appropriate supervision arrangements put in place where a criminal record check had not been received prior to the member of staff starting work. Boarding staff have not taken up their role until an enhanced Disqualification and Barring Service (DBS) check has been received. Records show that the single central register of appointments and checking systems are monitored regularly and effectively by both senior leadership and the chairman of the CCSWC.

### **Provision of information [ISSR Part 6 paragraph 32(1)(g)]**

The school meets the regulation.

All information requested during the visit was made available promptly and efficiently.

### **Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7 paragraph 33(c) and 33(j) and NMS 18.1]**

The school meets the regulations and standard.

The complaints policy sets out clear timescales for the management of a complaint. Comprehensive records of all complaints show that it has been applied correctly at every stage. No formal complaints have been received since the previous visit. One complaint, received prior to that visit, is still on-going.

### **Quality of leadership in and management of schools [ISSR Part 8 paragraph 34(1)(a) and (b) and Part 3 paragraph 8(a) and (b) and NMS 13.3 and 13.4]**

The school meets the regulation and standard.

The review of governance has led to the establishment of four committees, including the CCSWC, with responsibility for safeguarding and pupils' well-being, each chaired by a member of council and comprising members of council and senior members of staff. The committees which report directly to council, are responsible for overseeing policy and procedure within their remit and, in particular, for monitoring the effectiveness of its implementation. Discussion with members of council, scrutiny of minutes of meetings and examination of the extensive records now kept, such as the staff safeguarding training log, provides clear evidence of close monitoring through questioning and sampling.

### **Quality of leadership in and management of schools [ISSR Part 8 paragraph 34(1)(c) and Part 3 paragraph 8(a) and (b) and NMS 13.5]**

The school meets the regulation and standard.

The electronic record system (CPOMS) is now fully embedded and is used by staff to record all issues arising concerning pupils including welfare, pastoral, disciplinary and academic. The flexibility of the system, including a range of levels of access, allows close monitoring of individuals and groups by all senior staff including the DSL and house masters/mistresses. Pastoral staff were, however, keen to stress that CPOMS is not a replacement for personal communication, but rather a very effective tool for keeping and sharing records and for monitoring pupils' well-being. Examples of its recent use clearly illustrated the positive impact of the system.

The pastoral planning committee meets twice termly to identify and discuss pastoral issues raised in pupil welfare surveys and other forums including school council as well as issues of wider, including national, concern. A recent action has been helping pupils set up a sexuality and gender group within the school, open to all. The peer mentoring system has already begun to be established and the sixth-form volunteers have undergone training for their roles.

## **Welfare, Health and Safety [ISSR Part 3 paragraph 8(a) and (b), and NMS 13.1]**

The school meets the regulation and the standard.

The role of the member of CCSWC with responsibility for boarding is to monitor the implementation of both policy and procedure, especially those related to safeguarding and pupils' welfare, in all the boarding houses and to ensure that the school actively promotes the well-being of boarders. They have instigated an on-going programme of house visits, during which they hold in-depth discussions with the house master/mistress and the matron, tour the house and scrutinise documentation including boarding logs and the results of any recent boarders' questionnaire. They work closely with the DSL and report their findings, highlighting any concerns, to the regular meetings of the CCSWC. Boarding staff welcome the increased involvement of members of council and the move away from a system where houses were independent units, noting that there has been a welcome 'sea change' in attitudes and atmosphere across the school in recent months. In interview, boarders of all ages said they were happy, enjoyed school life, were well cared for and felt safe, with plenty of people to turn to if they needed support.

### **Regulatory action points**

The school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and the Early Years Statutory Framework.