



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Lincoln Minster School

November 2021

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School's Details

School	Lincoln Minster School			
DfE number	925/6012			
Registered charity number	1016538			
Address	Lincoln Minster School The Prior Building Upper Lindum Street Lincoln Lincolnshire LN2 5RW			
Telephone number	01522 551300			
Email address	communications@lincolnminsterschool.co.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Maria Young			
Proprietor	United Learning			
Age range	4 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	488			
	Day pupils	425	Boarders	36
	EYFS	18	Preparatory	114
	Seniors	266	Sixth Form	90
Inspection dates	10 to 12 November 2021			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Lincoln Minster School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. It was formed by the merger of Lincoln Cathedral School, St Joseph's School for Girls and Stonefield House School in 1996. In 2011, St Mary's Preparatory School merged with Lincoln Minster to form Lincoln Minster Preparatory School. The school is overseen by United Learning, who delegate specific responsibilities to a local governing body. The school comprises a preparatory school for Years Reception to 6 and a senior school and sixth form for Years 7 to 13, on two sites in Lincoln's historic quarter. Boarders are accommodated in two houses close to the senior school campus.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the Nursery has closed and the Reception class, together with Years 1 and 2, have moved into the preparatory school. The current chair of governors was appointed in 2020. The current headmistress of the senior school has been in post since September 2020 and the current head of the preparatory school since September 2021.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school was closed except for key worker and vulnerable children who remained onsite. Later in the summer term the school reopened for Year Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 and then to Year 2 on a reduced timetable. No boarders remained on site.
- 1.4 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.5 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.6 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.7 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held, with the exception of IGCSE Mathematics in 2021. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades were awarded.
- 1.8 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.9 The school aims to provide an inspiring education for life for all pupils in an environment that sets high expectations. It seeks to ensure that pupils' individual talents and abilities are nurtured and that they flourish through support and appreciation. The school aspires to encourage pupils of different abilities and interests to test new skills and to grow in self-esteem.

About the pupils

- 1.10 Pupils come from a range of local professional, farming and air force families, mostly living within a 40-mile radius of Lincoln. Boarders come from the United Kingdom and overseas. Nationally standardised test data indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average in the preparatory school and broadly average in the senior school. The school has identified 92 pupils as having special educational needs (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia, and of whom 62 receive additional specialist help. There are eight pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. English

is an additional language (EAL) for 34 pupils, who receive additional support for their English. The school has identified 127 pupils as the most able or talented, and the curriculum is modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report 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. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

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 and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the prep school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2020 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2020 to 2021 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.5 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 pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.6 Pupils receive relationships education in the prep school.
- 2.7 Pupils in the senior school do not receive relationships and sex education, as required by current statutory guidance. The school has not consulted parents as required before making or revising a written statement of its relationships and sex education policy, nor published such a statement on the school website, advising parents of their rights of withdrawal.
- 2.8 The standards relating to the quality of education in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 are met, but those in paragraph 2A [relationships and sex education] are not met.**

Action point 1

The school must ensure that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as they are lawfully excused [paragraphs 2A(1)(b)].

Action point 2

The school must consult parents before making or revising a written statement of its relationships and sex education policy, and publish such a statement on the school website [paragraphs 2A(1)(d), (e), (f) and (g), 2A(2)].

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.9 Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.10 Principles and values which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens are not always actively promoted. In particular, the school does not actively encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. It does not always ensure that male and female pupils are treated equally throughout the school and in the boarding houses. A small minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire disagreed that the school treats pupils fairly.

2.11 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in paragraph 5 is not met.

Action point 3

The school must actively encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. In particular, it must ensure that male and female pupils are treated equally throughout the school and in the boarding houses [paragraph 5(b)(vi)].

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.12 Good behaviour is promoted; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 Arrangements are not always made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance. The school does not ensure that all staff receive the required training or that appropriate records are kept of pupils with mental health issues and other safeguarding concerns. The school has not always responded to reports of alleged peer-on-peer abuse effectively. Leaders do not always ensure that all checks on staff required by current statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, are carried out before staff commence work at the school. The proprietors do not oversee safeguarding effectively including through the required annual review. A small minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that they could speak to an adult at school if they were worried about something.
- 2.15 The school does not implement an effective anti-bullying policy. A few parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that the school takes bullying seriously and deals with all types of bullying and harassment effectively.
- 2.16 Pupils at the senior school are not always supervised effectively.
- 2.17 The standards on child protection of boarders (NMS 11), promoting positive behaviour and relationships (NMS 12) and staffing and supervision [NMS 15] are not met and represent a failure to safeguard boarders.
- 2.18 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 6, 9, 11–16; NMS 2–4, 6–10, 15 and 16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met but those in paragraphs 7(a) and (b) [safeguarding], 8(a) and (b) [safeguarding of boarders] and 10 [bullying], and NMS 11 [child protection], 12 [promoting positive behaviour and relationships] and 15 [staffing and supervision] are not met.**

Action point 4

The school must ensure that all checks on staff required by current statutory guidance are carried out before staff commence work at the school [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.7, 3.9 and 3.11].

Action point 5

The school must ensure that all staff receive safeguarding training as required by current statutory guidance [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.6 and 3.7].

Action point 6

The school must ensure that appropriate records are kept of pupils with mental health issues and other safeguarding concerns [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4 and 3.7].

Action point 7

The proprietor must oversee safeguarding effectively, including through a suitable annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.7].

Action point 8

The school must ensure that it responds to reports of alleged bullying including peer-on-peer abuse effectively [paragraph 10; NMS 12.1 and 12.2].

Action point 9

The school must ensure that pupils at the senior school are always supervised effectively [paragraph 14; NMS 15.4].

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.19 A register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.20 The school does not always make appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff. In particular, the school does not always check the medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom or, where appropriate, qualifications or further checks for those who have lived or worked overseas before staff commence working at the school. The school has not always put in place appropriate additional safeguards should an enhanced criminal record certificate be delayed.
- 2.21 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 19–21 are met, but those in paragraph 18 [suitability of staff] are not met.

Action point 10

The school must ensure that checks on the right to work in the United Kingdom, medical fitness, and, when appropriate, qualifications and further checks for those who have lived or worked overseas, are in place before staff commence working at the school [paragraph 18(2)(c)(ii), (iii), (iv), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f) and 18(3); NMS 14.1; EYFS 3.9 and 3.11].

Action point 11

The school must ensure that appropriate additional safeguards are put in place should an enhanced criminal record certificate be delayed [paragraph 18(2)(d); NMS 14.1; EYFS 3.9].

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.22 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' 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.
- 2.23 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.24 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes 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 provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually 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.
- 2.25 The school does not make the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year available to parents or prospective parents.
- 2.26 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is not met.**

Action point 12

The school must make the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year available to parents or prospective parents [paragraph 32(3)(f)].

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.27 Parental complaints are handled by a complaints policy through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school) and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant, although the policy is not always followed effectively. In particular, complainants are not always informed of all the stages of the process available to them. Each stage has clear time scales, but the time scale for written complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements is not made clear.
- 2.28 Records of complaints made directly to the headmistress are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision. There is no clear record of any complaints that might have been made to other staff at the school. Complaints submitted directly to the proprietor are not managed appropriately and have not been made available to the body conducting an inspection. A small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that the school responds promptly and effectively to their concerns or complaints.
- 2.29 The standard relating to the handling of complaints in paragraph 33 and NMS 18 are not met.**

Action point 13

The school must ensure that complainants are always informed of all the stages of the complaints process available to them [paragraphs 33(f); NMS 18.1 and 18.2; EYFS 3.74].

Action point 14

The school must ensure that appropriate records are kept of all formal complaints submitted to the school, and that these records are made available to the body conducting an inspection [paragraphs 33(j)(i) and (ii), 33(k); NMS 18.1 and 18.2; EYFS 3.74].

Action point 15

The school must ensure that the time scale for written complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements is made clear [paragraphs 33(c); EYFS 3.74].

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.30 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and that they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.31 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 and NMS 13 are not met.

Action point 16

The school must ensure that the proprietor and the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and that they actively promote the well-being of the pupils [paragraphs 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.1, 13.3–13.5 and 13.8].

3. Inspection Evidence

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a member of the proprietorial body, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and form meetings. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Serena Alexander	Reporting inspector
Miss Bridget Ward	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, GSA school)
Mrs Jane Tudor	Team inspector for boarding (Former head, SoH school)