

# Progress monitoring and material change inspection report

12 to 13 May 2025

## **Cherwell College Oxford**

College Administration Office

Cornmarket

Oxford

OX1 3HA

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

## Inspection outcome

The school meets all the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection.

The school has requested a material change to increase the number of pupils to a total of 100 and within this number to increase the number of boarding pupils by a further 28. The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards and National Minimum Standards for boarding if the material change is implemented. It is recommended that the material change be approved.

## Inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR Paragraph 2A; NMS 17.1

1. Since the previous inspection, the school has put in place a programme for relationships and sex education (RSE) for secondary age pupils. This programme reflects statutory guidance. RSE schemes of work are age appropriate and cover themes such as consent, appropriate relationships and physical health. RSE lessons are split by age and are taught by qualified specialists. Leaders have consulted with parents about the course content. Suitable arrangements are in place for parents to request withdrawal from the non-statutory components of sex education within the teaching of RSE.
2. The school meets the relevant Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b), 11, 12, 14, 15, 16(a) and (b); NMS 7, 8, 9, 10 and 20

3. Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements for pupils are effectively managed. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed the head of boarding as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and another member of the leadership team as the deputy DSL. This now complies with statutory guidance. There is a nominated board member for safeguarding who is the governor representative. Additionally, the DSL and deputies undertake annual training that is appropriate and in accordance with locally agreed procedures. This training also includes 'Prevent' duty training.
4. Boarding staff, including the head of boarding, have completed a number of professional boarding courses since the previous inspection. These have included first aid, fire warden and fire evacuation training as well as a course in the administration of medicines. Boarding staff have close contact with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board who also provide safeguarding training for staff. Oversight of boarding is the role of the vice principal who holds weekly minuted meetings with the house staff and regular meetings with the boarding pupils to ensure that the quality of the boarding provision meets the Standards.
5. Leaders have put in place a new recording process to more accurately record concerns relating to pupils. Staff know the pupils well and are aware of the particular needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff listen to pupils and undertake appropriate actions to help and support them when issues arise. There is regular and effective communication with external agencies, including with local authority children's services when required. Pupils have access to, and know how to use, the school's reporting procedures, which includes the opportunity for pupils to report any concerns they may have anonymously.

6. Appropriate and detailed records of safeguarding concerns are maintained by leaders. Senior leaders liaise appropriately and promptly both with parents and the local safeguarding partnerships. The proprietors and staff receive suitable safeguarding training. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increased number of pupils.
7. Staff are well informed about different types of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment or sexual violence, and understand the need to respond appropriately and report promptly any concerns. Appropriate measures are in place to handle any allegations against adults working in the school. Staff understand these and how to report any concerns they may have without delay. This includes any low-level concerns relating to the behaviour of adults, which are monitored by the DSL. The proprietorial board undertakes an annual review of safeguarding with due diligence. Safeguarding is a weekly standing agenda item for all pastoral meetings, which are attended by senior leaders including the proprietors. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils.
8. Since the previous inspection the school has put in place a new process to record and monitor attendance that follows the statutory guidance. The updated policy is available on the school website as required. Scrutiny of the updated procedure confirms that staff practice now reflects the processes for recording, analysing and improving attendance. There is a set process to track and follow up both day and boarding pupils who miss either a morning or afternoon session. In the event of a non-attending or missing pupil, the wellbeing manager is alerted promptly and takes immediate action.
9. The school adopts an effective approach to managing risk to help ensure the welfare of its pupils. All staff receive training to produce risk assessments for their respective areas of responsibility, including risk assessments for school outings and trips. Senior leaders scrutinise and sign off all risk assessments. Written risk assessments include the identification of likely hazards and suitable mitigation measures. A range of appropriately detailed welfare risk assessments are produced to support individual pupils where required. The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils.
10. There are appropriate numbers of trained staff to supervise day and boarding pupils. Weekend and evening supervision of the boarding house is managed by residential house parents. Staffing numbers, although currently able to meet the projected increase in pupil numbers, will be subject to regular review as pupil numbers increase. The current arrangements are sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed number of additional pupils.
11. The school meets the relevant Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

#### **Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

ISSR Paragraphs 18, 19, 20 and 21; NMS 19

12. Senior leaders ensure that all the relevant checks on staff, supply staff and proprietors are undertaken and completed before staff commence employment. There is a comprehensive and accurate single central record (SCR) of appointments which clearly records the dates on which checks were carried out. The current arrangements are sufficient to enable the school to meet the needs of any additional pupils and corresponding increase in staffing requirements.

13. The school meets the Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

## **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

ISSR Paragraphs 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29; NMS 4 and 5

14. Pupils have access to suitable toilet, washing and changing facilities and the single en-suite facilities in the boarding house. Boarding accommodation is of a good standard. Leaders plan to increase the boarding provision with an additional 28 study bedsits to meet the needs of the proposed increase in the number of boarding pupils. The existing school buildings are sufficient to meet the accommodation requirements for pupils. Leaders' plans to refurbish two additional buildings will be suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
15. Site management is supervised by a professional contractor who, together with the proprietors, has oversight of all school buildings. This includes security, fire prevention and evacuation, health and safety matters, electrical systems and water supply to all school buildings. Detailed logs of routine inspections and checks are maintained. Suitable maintenance schedules are established. Staff receive regular training in respect of fire prevention and practice and in health and safety. Members of the school's health and safety committee provide input in terms of both training and monitoring. Both staff and pupils know how to report any maintenance issues, and any reported defects are promptly addressed.
16. Suitable acoustic conditions, lighting arrangements and water supplies are in place in all school buildings, including the boarding house. Appropriate sound insulation is provided where required. Suitable external lighting is in place and is regularly checked, including for the boarding house. Water supplies are available across all areas of the school with hot and cold water, including ready access to clearly marked drinking fountains for pupils. This provision is likely to be adequate for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
17. Appropriate arrangements are in place to care for pupils in the school or boarding house who require first aid or medical assistance. Reception staff in the main school are all first aid trained as are boarding house parents, one of whom is a qualified nurse. Medicines are securely stored, and an appropriately equipped room is available for pupils who require medical attention in both the school administration block and in the boarding house. This provision is likely to be adequate for the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.
18. The boarding house has a garden, and pupils have access to suitable outdoor space where they can socialise and engage in recreational activities. This provision is likely to be adequate for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
19. The school meets the relevant Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

## **Part 6. Provision of information**

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(e), 32(1)(f); NMS 12

20. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published appropriately on the school's website and are accessible to parents. Leaders have ensured that the information provided on the school's website now complies with the statutory requirements and this includes information of previous reports and the results of public examinations.

- 21. Boarding pupils are able to maintain appropriate and regular contact with parents or carers.
- 22. The school meets the Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

## **Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools**

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c); NMS 1

- 23. The school leaders and proprietors have improved the school's systems and processes. This enables them to more effectively fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that the independent school Standards and the requirements of the National Minimum Standards are met consistently.
- 24. Leaders have put in place improved monitoring systems, supported by regular minuted meetings, which better focus leaders and proprietors in monitoring the required Standards, and ensure that policies and procedures are appropriate and relevant to the school's needs. Regular reporting and the production of termly proprietors' reports demonstrate an increased focus on meeting the Standards and requirements. Additionally, improved co-ordination between the academic, administrative and pastoral welfare teams is more actively promoting pupil welfare because leaders across the school are more focused on individual pupil welfare needs.
- 25. Leaders have carefully considered their strategic planning to manage a gradual increase in pupil numbers. Boarding house construction work, currently underway, is scheduled for completion by January 2026.
- 26. The school meets the Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

## School details

<b>School</b>	Cherwell College Oxford
<b>Department for Education number</b>	931/6016
<b>Address</b>	Cherwell College Oxford College Administration Office Cornmarket OX1 3HA
<b>Phone number</b>	+ 44 (0) 1865 242670
<b>Email address</b>	secretary@cherwell-college.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cherwell-college.co.uk">www.cherwell-college.co.uk</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Oxbridge College Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Stephen Clarke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Clarke
<b>Age range</b>	15-20
<b>Number of pupils</b>	29
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	15
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5, 6, 7 and 11 November 2024

## Information about the school

27. Cherwell College Oxford is a co-educational, independent boarding school under the proprietorship of Oxbridge College Limited. The school is centrally located in the city of Oxford. Since the previous inspection the school has relocated its administration centre to the Cornmarket site.
28. A small number of pupils attend lessons online.
29. There are 15 full-time boarders who reside in a purpose-built boarding house located a short walk away from the teaching facilities. The boarding house is currently being enlarged to accommodate a further 26 pupils and two residential staff.
30. The school has identified 10 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Seven pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
31. English is an additional language for 14 pupils.
32. The school states that its aims are to send students on to leading universities and onward to a career where they will be able to work independently for the benefit of themselves and those around them.

## Purpose of the progress monitoring and material change inspection

This was a progress monitoring inspection carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, combined with a material change inspection. Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the DfE to make a material change to the school's provision.

The purpose of this inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the Independent School Standards and National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other Standards that were unmet at the school's previous inspection, and to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the independent school Standards if the material change the school has requested is implemented.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

12 to 13 May 2025

33. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for 2 days.

34. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- tour of the school site to view day and boarding accommodation
- discussions with the chair of governors and proprietors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils and staff
- visits to the boarding house accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work in respect of PSHE and RSE.
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school
- scrutiny of information published on the school's website.



### **How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant Standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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