

Great Oaks Small School

Ebbsfleet Farmhouse, Ebbsfleet Lane, Minster, Ramsgate, Kent, CT12 5DL

Inspection dates 12 November 2014

Overall outcome **Independent school standards met**

Context of the inspection

This inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan. The school was last inspected in March 2014. At that time, there were a number of regulations associated with students' welfare, health and safety that were not met. Consequently, leadership and management and overall effectiveness were judged inadequate. An action plan was submitted by the headteacher and evaluated as satisfactory in July 2014. This is the first progress monitoring inspection.

Main findings

Welfare, health and safety

The inspection of March 2014 found that some of the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school did not comply with the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Nationally approved 'safer recruitment' procedures were not being implemented and neither the headteacher nor any of the trustees had completed the necessary training. The single central record of checks on employees was not maintained or completed in accordance with the regulations; necessary checks on employees were not fully implemented or documented. In their action plan, leaders undertook to review the safeguarding policy and implement training to ensure that future practice fully aligns with best practice. The headteacher and a trustee have now completed 'safer recruitment' training and a named trustee now conducts regular checks, which include scrutiny of the single central record. All staff have been subject to the necessary checks, including those newly appointed. This standard is now met.

The previous inspection also found that certain aspects of the school's health and safety policy did not comply with relevant health and safety laws and therefore failed to meet the required standards to ensure the health, welfare and safety of the students. Some aspects of the teaching accommodation located in the barn did not comply with fire safety regulations and other aspects of the accommodation located within the main building presented potential hazards. In their action plans, leaders committed to conducting an immediate fire risk assessment and a health and safety audit. They undertook to revise the health and safety policy and assigned responsibility to a named trustee to ensure that all risk assessments are annually reviewed and follow-up actions are implemented, recorded and reported to the board of trustees. This inspection found that all recommended actions arising from the health and safety audit and fire risk assessment have been fully implemented and the named trustee has already conducted monitoring visits. This standard is now met.

Suitability of staff

The inspection of March 2014 found that criminal record checks were not taking place at the

time of appointment and checks on those employed since 2003 had not been fully completed. The single central record of checks on employees was only partially complete. This inspection found that leaders have now rectified the shortfall and the standard is fully met.

Provision of information

The inspection of March 2014 found that leaders had not made statutory policies available on their website to parents or carers. Equally, they had not signalled to parents, carers or other interested parties how to access copies of these policies should they require them. Furthermore, leaders had failed to ensure that accounts of income and expenditure in relation to local authority funded student placements were routinely collated and provided to the authorities. This inspection found that leaders have addressed each of these aspects fully. This standard is now met.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

At the time of the last inspection, the complaints policy did not specify the need to record the outcome of any complaint at the preliminary level. Neither did it indicate whether a complaint would be taken to a panel hearing. Equally, the policy did not indicate that copies of outcomes and recommendations would be made available to the headteacher and proprietor, the complainant and the other parties concerned. This inspection found that these aspects have been correctly addressed. The amended policy is now available to parents via the school's website.

Inspection team

Lesley Farmer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Great Oaks Small School is an independent secondary day school situated in a semi-rural location on the outskirts of the village of Minster-in-Thamet. The school is based in a large farmhouse, with additional teaching areas in adjoining buildings. It first opened in 2001 and is registered to take students between the ages of 11 and 18 years.
- The school caters for students of average ability and above who have experienced disrupted education because of emotional or physical challenges or chronic illness, or because of their learning difficulties. The aim of the school is to provide:
`an holistic education which ensures a well-rounded intellectual, moral, social, aesthetic and physical development for each student so that all can develop their self-confidence within `a democratic atmosphere of tolerance and respect`.
- Students are prepared for external examinations in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- There are currently 17 boys and girls on roll. Fourteen are full-time and 3 are supported part-time in their own homes. Five students are looked after by their local authorities and 15 have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school uses local leisure and sports facilities to provide physical education.
- The school was last inspected in March 2014.

School details

Unique reference number	133539
Inspection number	452245
DfE registration number	886/6093

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	17
Number of part time pupils	3
Proprietor	The Trustees of Great Oaks Small School
Chair	Penny Jackson
Headteacher	Julie Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	19–21 March 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,660–£21,386
Telephone number	01843 822022
Email address	office@greatoakssmallschool.co.uk

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