

North Bridge Enterprise College

Marshgate, Elwis Street, Doncaster, DN5 8AF

Inspection dates

24 March 2015

Overall outcome

Unmet independent school standards identified

Reason for the inspection

- The inspection was to be carried out as a first full inspection of the school. Inspection evidence on the first day led to this changing to an emergency inspection.

Main findings

This inspection showed that a number of independent school regulations within Standard 3, Standard 5 and Standard 8 are not being met.

- The school's written policy for welfare, health and safety, available on the website, is a generic one. It refers to a policy specific to the school, which could not be inspected due to the particular time constraints imposed by the closure of the unsafe building.
- The school's compliance with requirements for fire safety was checked. The inspector was told that the rear gate, enabling students and staff to leave the school site, was locked and only opened for escape during a fire. The inspector asked who had a key to the gate and the staff said that this was kept in the main reception office at the front of the school building. The inspector asked how the key was brought to the rear gate and staff said this is done by the fire warden. The inspector asked what would happen if there was a fire blocking the fire warden's route; the leaders said that the gate could not be opened. The inspector asked if this issue had been raised by the fire service when they checked the school prior to registration. Leaders said that the fire service asked for a key to be made available in a location at the rear of the school. Leaders commented that this had not been done.
- The inspector observed that the fire alarm system in the main building was missing three sounder/light units. These should have been located in the main entrance (adjacent to two classrooms), the small corridor (outside the staffroom) and the main hall including the food studies area and toilets. School leaders said that they had been assured by the fire alarm maintenance company that the system was working. At the request of the inspector to test the system it became clear to the leaders that there was no alarm sounding in these areas.
- Following telephone calls with several fire alarm maintenance companies, the leaders were told that the necessary parts would not be available until, at the earliest, Monday 30 March. Consequently the leaders notified the inspector that in agreement with the proprietor, the school would close to staff, pupils and visitors for the remainder of the week, by which time pupils would then be on their Easter break. Leaders were anticipating that the necessary work would be done over this period prior to students returning week commencing 13 April 2015.
- The inspector asked about several lengths of frayed armoured electrical cabling sticking out the ground near the outdoor classroom entrances. The school leaders said that they had been told that these had been made safe, but had not yet been removed. The inspector was unable to confirm whether the electrical cabling had been made safe or that it would not become live in

the future.

- The premises were inspected with respect to ensuring students' welfare, health and safety. Toilets provided for male and female students were found to be in a shabby condition. The door return mechanism on the girls' toilet entrance door was broken. A door was missing from a boys' toilet cubicle. Damage to ceiling tiles and walls had not been repaired. Plywood walls separating the boys' cubicles were not painted, increasing the risk of contamination.
- The inspector noticed that the hand towel dispensers were empty and that there was no soap provided in both toilets. Staff said that students needed to come and ask for these because they would throw the items away and block the toilets.
- While undertaking a tour of the building, the inspector became aware of electrical wiring protruding from trunking, sockets and light fittings in the large hall, upstairs art room and common room used by students. All were within reach of the inspector. All cables tested by the electrician using a safe testing device were live.
- Light fittings in the large hall area were in different states of repair. Some ceiling fluorescent lights had tubes missing. All wall-mounted fluorescent lights had tubes missing. However, two fittings on the wall, at the inspector's head height, had exposed wires. Tests showed these were live.
- Several lights in the main reception area were not working. This is the main fire egress route from the building.
- All external lights at the rear of the building were broken. These are used to provide lighting for students moving to and from the outdoor classrooms.
- The external space at the back of the main building is nominated for students to play and is where the outside classrooms are located. In several places, there were small walls built by students as part of the construction course demonstrating that they access this area. However, the space was littered with rubble containing glass and nails.
- The inspector and school leaders identified rusted steel structures protruding from the ground and sharp level changes in the surface of the external space.
- Work was being undertaken to replace an existing area of tarmac. However, the associated skip had been filled and loose material left in-situ on the ground.
- The leaders were not aware of a stack of wooden timber with protruding nails and old desks which were found placed behind the classrooms.
- School leaders have not acted on the advice provided by the fire service with regard to ensuring a key is readily available to those who need to open the rear gate.
- The leaders said that the school produces an electronic log of maintenance issues that require attention in the building. They explained that the log is seen by senior leaders within the group. However, serious issues such as the maintenance of the fire alarm system, the unsafe outdoor area and protruding live electrical cabling had not been attended to.
- School staff rely on contractors to provide services in order to ensure the on-going maintenance of systems in the building, for example repairs to doors and the fire alarm system. The inspector and leaders observed a contractor push a bare electrical cable back into a junction box in the students' common room. The cable had been loosened by students pulling on it. The leaders commented to the inspector that the contractor did not check if the cable was live at the time. A subsequent check showed that the cable was live.
- Leaders have not ensured that contractors, such as those maintaining fire alarms and undertaking electrical work, carry this out to a high enough standard.
- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met, nor have they ensured the welfare health and safety of students.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements by ensuring:

- that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by drawing up and effective

implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11)

- compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12)
- the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy (paragraph 16(a)) and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16(b))
- that the school premises and accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 25)
- that the lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein (paragraphs 27, 27(a))
- that external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave school premises (paragraph 27(b))
- that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable pupils to play outside (paragraphs 29(1), 29(1)(b))
- that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school (paragraph 34(1)) - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a)); fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(b); and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1)(c)).

Inspection team

Jonathan Woodyatt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- The school is owned by Bettercare Keys Limited which also operates other schools in the region and nationally.
- The school is located in an adapted industrial unit close to the centre of Doncaster. Although most of the unit is single storey, there is a second floor covering approximately a third of the building. There are two external 'portable' classrooms located in the large space at the back of the main building.
- The school is registered to take boys and girls aged from 11-17. Leaders said that there were currently 49 students on roll who were in Years 10 and 11. No students have attended the school beyond Year 11; consequently there has been no sixth form provision since the last inspection.
- At present, the school caters for students placed by the local authority. The leaders explained that the students would have attended the pupil referral unit which was closed by the local authority. The school leaders commented that many students have behavioural difficulties and poor attitudes to learning.
- The school received a pre-registration visit on 17 March 2014 and this noted that all aspects of the regulations were likely to be met. Records at that time indicated that the school was operating and pupils were in attendance.
- Leaders declared the building unsafe at the end of the first day of the inspection. There was insufficient time for the inspector to gather a full set of evidence, including school details.

School details

Unique reference number	140816
Inspection number	463882
DfE registration number	371/60011

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Type of school	Day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11-17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	None
Number of part time pupils	Unknown
Proprietor	Bettercare Keys Limited
Chair	Heather Laffin
Headteacher	Linda Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	Unknown
Telephone number	01302 343935
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